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DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER?

BY THE REV.

R. McCHEYNE ✓✓ EDGAR, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE CROSS," ETC.

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TO THE
REV. HENRY WALLACE,

PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, BELFAST,
AUTHOR OF "REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITY, A LAW OF THE DIVINE PROCEDURE
IN PROVIDENCE AND REDEMPTION," ETC.

DEAR PROFESSOR WALLACE,—

I deem it a great privilege to be allowed to associate your name with this little book. By all who know you well, you are regarded as the greatest living master of the art of analogical reasoning. Butler's method is not deemed by you, as it is by some less thorough thinkers, an anachronism in our present stage of progress; on the contrary, you believe it capable of most profitable extension, and still the great philosophical defence of the Christian faith. It is the analogical argument which is employed in the present essay. You have been good enough to read over the proofs and to express your approval of the general course of argument they contain. You say most truly that "verification is the great difficulty" and, in venturing to handle this part of the subject, I have not been unmindful of the circumstance that the outstanding facts, which I maintain fairly imply the efficacy of prayer, have received explanations excluding the idea of its efficacy altogether. All we can do in such circumstances is to abide by the *more reasonable explanation*. But as everything depends on the *moral attitude* we take up in the inquiry, I would respectfully solicit attention to the "Epilogue" before judgment is passed upon the "Verification."

You have expressed yourself very cordially about the value of Note H, in the Appendix, in which the proposed *Hospital Test* is treated more fully than was possible when drafting the text. It was written in 1872, when the proposal was made, but has lain among my papers until now. I am grateful for your verdict on it, and hope it may secure attention to it, though it has been relegated to the Appendix.

It only remains for me to tender to you in this public manner the gratitude I feel for the encouragement and sympathy you have extended to me for a long series of years.

I remain, dear Professor Wallace,

Yours most faithfully,

R. MCCHEYNE EDGAR.

DUBLIN, *September 24th*, 1883.

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PART I.



Introductory.

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- CHAP. I. THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PRAYER.
,, II. A PRAYERLESS WORLD.
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CHAPTER I.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PRAYER.

§ 1. WE deem it unnecessary to make any apology in proposing to reconsider the problem of PRAYER. Its importance cannot be overrated. If it be reasonable to believe in the existence of a great Spirit, whose intelligence, sensibility, and power of will are infinite, who is self-sufficing in His personality and yet pre-eminently social in His character, then prayer to Him cannot but be a most important element in human experience and factor in human progress. If, on the other hand, it can be shown to be unreasonable and superfluous to posit any such personality at the back of things, truth demands that prayer should be denounced as an irrational superstition, and every effort short of brute force made to eliminate it from the world. The question we have judicially to consider, and, if possible, decide, is, which of these alternatives is warranted by the facts already discovered?

§ 2. With the facts, then, let it be understood, no sane man can have any quarrel. But unfortunately there is a danger of mere efforts of the imagination and unwarranted inferences being passed off, consciously or unconsciously, as facts; and the business of the inquirer is to sift the allegations, and make sure, if clear thinking can enable him to do so, that no unfounded assumption be introduced into

the settlement of such a vital question. Our business, in a word, is critical. We accept gratefully the facts brought to light by science, and we inquire carefully into the conclusions based upon them. In the domain of logic we are, if clear in our thinking, on equal terms with the scientific observer. We do not accept his conclusions from the facts unless they have been logically deduced. We cheerfully allow him superiority in observation, while we reserve our right as rational beings to judge of the deductions he makes from the facts which his superior observation has ascertained.

§ 3. Now the present age is pre-eminently one of Natural History. The impression prevails that unless we know the natural history of objects, of rites, ceremonies, customs, and the like, we know little or nothing in reality about them. Hence the prime inquiry now is *how* things came about; what has been the order of their development? Hume, for example, gave us in his time the "Natural History of Religion"; and in comparatively recent years Isaac Taylor has given us the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," W. E. H. Lecky the "Natural History of Morals," introductory to his "History of European Morals," and John Stuart Blackie, the "Natural History of Atheism," while, only to mention another name, we have received, in the voluminous writings of Herbert Spencer, Natural History in the garb of a philosophy, the impression conveyed by his comprehensive series being that in the natural history of an all-embracing Evolution we have everything which man has in his present condition any right to know. Now we have no objection to conform so far to the spirit of the age as to start with the Natural History of prayer. By all means let us know how prayer was developed. Every well-ascertained fact about it is

precious and instructive, and will help us in reaching an intelligent conclusion regarding it. But we must at the same time remember that the *reasonableness* of prayer and its *natural history* constitute two distinct questions, which ought not to be confounded. A single quotation from David Hume will place this caveat in clear and unmistakable light. At the very outset of his "Natural History of Religion" he says: "As every inquiry, which regards religion, is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular which challenge our attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its origin in human nature. Happily, the first question, which is the most important, admits of the most obvious, at least the clearest, solution. The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent Author; and no rational inquirer can, after serious reflection, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion. But the other question, concerning the origin of religion in human nature, is exposed to some more difficulty." We found no argument here upon Hume's admission of the reasonableness of Theism, although his testimony is unexceptionable. We simply insist that the distinction he here draws with his usual clearness between the foundation of religion in reason and its natural history shall also be recognized in the discussion of Prayer.

§ 4. When we ask the authorities, then, for information regarding the natural history of Prayer, we are thankful to be assured that "its study does not demand that detail of fact and argument which must be given to rites in comparison practically insignificant."* In truth prayer has been so general a practice during man's historic period, and is so universal a practice now, that no other conclusion

* Tylor's "Primitive Culture," vol. ii., p. 330.

regarding it is possible than that it is the rule, while prayerlessness is the rare exception. We are indeed told of "many races who distinctly admit the existence of spirits, but are not certainly known to pray to them even in thought,"* but when we look for definite statements, the prayerless races become almost a vanishing quantity. Thus Sir John Lubbock affirms that "the lower forms of religion are *almost independent of prayer*," but on reading further we find that this general statement rests on a deduction rather than on an induction, for he immediately adds, "To us prayer seems almost a necessary part of religion. But it evidently involves a belief in the goodness of God, a truth which, as we have seen, is not early recognized."† He mentions further on two interesting facts about prayerless races, which we give in his own words. "Even those negroes, says Bosman, who have a faint conception of a higher deity, do not pray to him, or offer any sacrifices to him; for which they give the following reasons: 'God,' say they, 'is too high exalted above us, and too great to condescend so much as to trouble himself, or think of mankind.'" And again Sir John tells us that the Caribs considered that the good Spirit "is endued with so great goodness, that it does not take any revenge even of its enemies, whence it comes that they render it neither honour nor adoration."‡

It would seem, then, so far as regards the historic period, that prayerlessness has been the exception. Only some astute tribes, far down in the scale of civilization, and some astute spirits at the summit, on so-called *rational* grounds,

* Tylor, *ut supra*.

† Sir John Lubbock's "Origin of Civilisation and Primitive Condition of Man," p. 288.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 289.

refuse to pray. The vast majority of men lying between have recognized a higher being or higher beings, and have tried to hold fellowship by prayer. Even Buddha himself, on setting out upon his mission of monkish meditation and Oriental stoicism, is represented as invoking all the Buddhas, or, as it has been translated, the Universal Spirit; and the prayer-mills, by which his followers reduce communion with their Buddha to a matter of machinery, exhibit the prayer-impulse in striking strength.* We may with confidence, therefore, affirm, as M. de Quatrefages says of Atheism, that prayerlessness is nowhere met with "except in an *erratic condition*. In every place, and at all times, the mass of populations have escaped it."†

§ 5. But when we pass into the prehistoric period, and accept the dim light of scientific theory, we are assured that man was originally in such a state of "utter barbarism" as not merely to be destitute of any kind of religion and any form of prayer, but even to be ignorant of his possession of a soul. It is hard to realize such utter animalism on the part of man, but it is best to make the attempt, that we may if possible seize the prayer-impulse at its inception. Accepting the assistance of Mr. Herbert Spencer, then, we are introduced to the "ancestral savage." He lived, like animals a little lower in the scale of existence, by the chase, but after some unusually successful expedition he over-ate himself, had what we now call the nightmare, and a peculiarly vivid dream. In dreamland he recognized an "other-self," distinct from the material body. A dualism is suggested to his opening mind. He next remarked that

* Cf. J. S. Blackie's "Natural History of Atheism," p. 137; see also *Scribner's Monthly Magazine*, vol. xxii., p. 733, upon "The Wheel as a Symbol in Religion," by C. F. G. Cumming.

† Cf. his "Human Species," pp. 482-3.

stones and trees and animals cast shadows; they consequently possessed a dualism too. The idea of spirits is now fairly abroad, and, when death presented itself to some of the ancestral savage's neighbours, he began to think of the neighbour's "other-self" becoming a "wandering double" in the silent realm beyond the perceptions of sense. It was easy to associate epileptic fits and insanity, when they occurred, with these released spirits, and it was desirable to propitiate them; and thus it came quite naturally to pass that out of dreams a spiritual world got manufactured, and religious rites and ceremonies with all their vast and interesting development.* It has been said, with a severity not undeserved, that this dream theory "needs no criticism. It assumes that men in general are fools; and there is nothing to do but to return the compliment."† Nevertheless, we are anxious to avail ourselves of whatever light the investigations of the ethnologists can cast on the origin of prayer. We turn consequently to Mr. Tylor, and find the following as his *rationale* of its rise and progress. "Prayer," he says, "'the souls' sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed,' is the address of personal spirit to personal spirit. So far as it is actually addressed to disembodied or deified human souls, it is simply an extension of the daily intercourse between man and man; while the worshipper, who looks up to other Divine beings, spiritual after the nature of his own spirit, though of place and power in the universe far beyond his own, still has his mind in a state where prayer is a reasonable and practical act. . . . It is not indeed claimed as an immediate or necessary outcome of animistic belief,‡ for

* Cf. Herbert Spencer's "Principles of Sociology," vol. i., pp. 147—440.

† Prof. B. P. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," p. 80.

‡ *i.e.*, Belief in spirits such as has been already described.

especially at low levels of civilization there are many races who distinctly admit the existence of spirits, but are not certainly known to pray to them even in thought. Beyond this lower level, however, animism and prayer become more and more nearly conterminous, and a view of their relation in their earlier stages may be easiest and best gained from a selection of actual prayers, taken down word for word, within the limits of savage and barbaric life. They agree with an opinion that prayer appeared in the religion of the lower culture, but that in this, its earliest stage, it was unethical. The accomplishment of desire is asked for; but desire is as yet limited to personal advantage. It is at later and higher moral levels that the worshipper begins to add to his entreaty for prosperity the claim for help toward virtue and against vice, and prayer becomes an instrument of morality.”* It will be observed that Mr. Tylor regards prayer as the projection into a spiritual realm of the intercourse which takes place in this world between man and man. We wish this fact to be noted in passing, as it will prove useful in our investigation afterwards.

§ 6. It would be unfair not to notice the criticism to which this theory of man's development from a condition of “utter barbarism” has been subjected. It is contended that it almost altogether ignores the possibility and actual fact of *degradation*, as well as of *development*. Man has a tendency to relapse into a degraded condition from a higher, just as in lower animals the tendency has been observed to revert to the original type. Nay more, it has been pertinently pointed out that man descends in his savagery to a lower stage than is found among the beasts below him. For his cruel treatment of women, for example, we have no analogue among the beasts. It is manifestly unfair,

* “Primitive Culture,” vol. ii., pp. 329—330.

therefore, in a discussion upon the natural history of man, to give so much about human development, and to say almost nothing about human degradation. Of course the introduction of this second factor complicates the problem, and detracts from its extraordinary simplicity. Yet with such cumulative evidence of human degradation around us, we cannot accept the account of man's leisurely progress upwards without pause or relapse as covering *all* the facts.* But even granting that the natural history of prayer has been the simple matter these theorists suppose, we must not imagine that we have got therein the *reason* for the exercise. This seems to be the mistake into which many at present fall. From the quotation already given from Hume, it will be seen that the reasonableness of religion and the origin are totally distinct questions. It was not because he had lost sight of the *reasonableness of religion* that in his book he restricted himself to its *Natural History*, but, strange to say, because he thought its reasonableness beyond question! In the very same way we must clearly distinguish between the origin of prayer and its grounds in reason. Its origin may be most insignificant or most obscure, its natural history may have been marked by much misconception and illusion, and yet it may be the most reasonable exercise in which intelligent beings can engage.

§ 7. It may be amusing as well as instructive to trace the natural history of prayer upwards, from the rude ancestor who first appealed to unseen helpers above him to those rapturous devotees who on the hills of Palestine gave

* Cf. "Primeval Man," by the Duke of Argyll, pp. 129—200; his Grace's papers in the *Contemporary Review* on "The Unity of Nature"; and Fraser's "Blending Lights," pp. 141—194.

us the crowning triumphs of devotion;* but it has nothing really to say as to the present reasonableness of Prayer. And indeed one of the chief critics of Christian prayer, in endeavouring to demonstrate that "physical nature is not its legitimate domain," acknowledges that "this conclusion must be based on pure physical evidence, and *not on any inherent unreasonableness in the act of prayer*. The theory that the system of nature is under the control of a Being who changes phenomena in compliance with the prayers of men, is, in my opinion, *a perfectly legitimate one*. It may, of course, be rendered futile by being associated with conceptions which contradict it; but such conceptions form no necessary part of the theory. It is a matter of experience that an earthly father, who is at the same time both wise and tender, listens to the requests of his children, and, if they do not ask amiss, takes pleasure in granting their requests. We know also that this compliance extends to the alteration, within certain limits, of the current of events on earth. With this suggestion offered by experience, it is *no departure from scientific method to place behind natural phenomena a Universal Father*, who, in answer to the prayers of His children, alters the currents of those phenomena. Thus far Theology and Science go hand in hand."† Of course our critic proceeds to assert that we fail in the *verification* of our theory, upon which point we shall have something to say further on. Meanwhile we simply call

* Ewald thinks that it was during the captivity prayer first gained importance among the Hebrews. A good account of prayer among the Hebrews is given by Pressel in Herzog's "Real Encyclopädie." "Delitsch" is also worthy of perusal sub "Gebet" in Riehm's "Handwörterbuch des Biblischen Altertums."

† Tyndall's "Fragments of Science," sixth edition, vol. ii., pp. 42—43. The italics are ours,

attention to the fact that Professor Tyndall here acknowledges that there is *no* "inherent unreasonableness in the act of prayer."

§ 8. It is needful at the present time especially to emphasize this distinction between the *origin* and the *reason* of things. We find the confusion of these ideas in the works of some of our subtlest thinkers. It was this confusion which led Locke to claim that "philosophical study must begin with an inquiry into the origin of our ideas." Kant fell into it when he insisted on a criticism of the faculty and process of knowing preceding metaphysics. Mill fell into it in his *Examination of Hamilton*, when he admits the infallibility of primitive beliefs, only raising doubts as to what beliefs are truly primitive. "He thinks," says an able writer, "that if we could look into the mind of the baby, as it lies in the nurse's arms, we should get the original philosophic revelation. Others again, haunted by the notion of heredity and evolution, are at a loss whether to look for this original element in the first polyp or in the primal star-dust; but all alike are agreed that, if we could reach it, we should get at indisputable truth. But this is plainly a mistake. It is not self-evident that the innate must be true. It is not self-evident that the baby, or the polyp, or the ancient star-dust, is a spring of pure and undefiled knowledge. Hence, after a proposition has been shown to be innate, the question of its truth remains open; and this question can be answered only by looking away from the psychological question of origin to the philosophic question of the grounds of the belief. Indeed, it would be hard to find a doctrine so out of harmony with every one of the current tendencies of thought as this one, which seeks for truth in the raw rudiments of consciousness rather than in its full manifestation. Every conception of

progress, every form of evolution, every analogy of nature, point rather to the opposite view—namely, that our faculties are most trustworthy in their developed form, and not in their crude beginnings.”* It is clear, therefore, that no lengthening out of the natural history of such a matter as prayer can ever do away with the necessity of facing the more important question of the rationality of it. We are not concerned with the many misconceptions and illusions which may have marked the history of prayer’s development, but we are concerned with the question, Does a personal God exist? and if He does, Can He reward those who diligently seek Him?

§ 9. That this is the true way of stating the question at issue will further appear if we consider from what school the more recent attacks on the efficacy of prayer have proceeded. They have proceeded from avowed agnostics. When a physicist like Professor Tyndall stands sponsor for the proposal to test the efficacy of prayer by hospital statistics, we at once remember the wooden horse at Troy, and suspect the proposal. For if a man has come to the conclusion that God is “unknown and unknowable,” if a man has accepted the notion that to ascribe “personality” to this Being behind all is to limit Him, then it is clear that the propriety of prayer has already been impugned by him, and he cannot face the question impartially.† His move must be suspected as *strategic*, however “serious” its title may profess to be.‡ Hence we must accept the challenge as really an attack on current conceptions of God,

* Prof. B. P. Bowne’s “Metaphysics,” pp. 13—14.

† Appendix. Note A.

‡ The joint communication of Prof. Tyndall and his anonymous friend in the *Contemporary Review* was “The Prayer for the Sick: Hints towards a SERIOUS attempt to estimate its value.”

and try to show how rational after all is our belief in His personality and in His power to hear and answer prayer.

§ 10. Prayer, let it be remembered, is admittedly imperfect. Once only did it reach absolute perfection in the prayers of Him whom we call our Saviour. All other prayers have been but distant approaches towards the great ideal. But one principle is common to all sincere prayer, and it is this: "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hence the twofold question demanding an answer in this discussion is, Does a personal God exist? and, Can He reward those who diligently seek Him? We face these questions within the limits assigned to us, hoping to show that it is more reasonable to believe in a personal God than in an impersonal One; and that it is also more reasonable to believe that He can hold communion with intelligent beings, desires to do so, and has actually done so, than to believe that silence is intended to reign between earth and heaven!

CHAPTER II.
A PRAYERLESS WORLD.

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§ 1. FROM our brief study of the *Natural History of Prayer* we have found that prayer has been the rule, and prayerlessness the rare exception, in the history of the human race. But before proceeding farther with the discussion, it may be well to pause, and to consider what the world would become if *prayerlessness* carried the day, and the minority who now maintain its wisdom succeeded in making converts of the entire praying majority. It must be admitted that it would amount to an unparalleled revolution; and an endeavour to estimate it will emphasize the great gravity of the present discussion.

§ 2. An effort was once made to bring about prayerlessness by force. It was when Darius the Mede had ascended the throne of Babylon, and the world lay at his feet. To accomplish a spiteful purpose, the presidents and princes persuaded the unsuspecting monarch to pass a decree "that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions." But the fear of the den of lions did not succeed in making the world prayerless. There was one man, at all events, who prized prayer so highly as to be willing to brave the lions rather than be forced to be a month without prayer. But we shall suppose that the crusade

against Prayer proves so successful that no Daniel shall come forth for judgment ; but the world on rational grounds will vote Daniel at Babylon, in his temporary sojourn with the lions, "a martyr by mistake." We shall suppose that by force of reason alone the whole world will some day cease to pray ; we shall suppose farther, in accordance with the gradual character of human progress, that this prayerlessness shall not be the effect of a sudden conversion of the race, but of a slow "enlightenment," and that the day at last dawns when prayer, which has lingered longest with "the poor, the widow, and the afflicted," has been hushed to silence—not a soul in this wide world any longer looking upwards. What would this prayerless world be ?

§ 3. Now we will not assert that the world, in such a case, would be without *religion*, since the opponents of prayer wish us to understand that their aim in this matter is to provide men with an improved religion. We will not affirm that the world in such a case would be without *worship*, since our prayerless friends are emphatic about the reality and importance of that "worship, for the most part, of the silent sort," which ascends to a God, "unknown and unknowable." We shall simply try to estimate the kind of world prayerlessness is calculated to produce. Happily we have had some assistance recently afforded by writers on the other side, which will greatly help us in estimating this prayerless "religion of the future."

§ 4. It will be acknowledged that a prayerless world would not continue to tolerate such absurdities as "houses of prayer." The author of "*Ecce Homo*" has indeed proposed, in his more recent work on "*Natural Religion*," to retain the churches, and the influence which gathers round them, as a temporary expedient until his eclectic "*Natural Religion*" gets full play ; but we must project our minds

beyond such temporising policies, and consider plainly whether churches would be tolerated in a world which has ceased to believe in the propriety of prayer. In fact, this author has contemplated the disappearance of churches as a possibility, and aptly refers to the expression of St. John in the Apocalypse, about seeing no temple in the New Jerusalem. But how different the reason assigned for the existence of no church building above, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it"! It is one thing to deem church buildings needless because prayer is an unmeaning superstition; it is another to deem them needless because the Divine Presence is felt to be all-pervading and every activity is worship. It is, then, as certain as anything can be, that if prayerlessness carries the day, churches, with all the institutions which centre around them, will either be demolished or applied to other purposes than prayer. We are anxious to learn what substitute the religion of the future will propose for these acknowledged factors in our civilization.

§ 5. If the worship of God, as we commonly understand it, is to cease, and man deems it profitless to pray to "the unknown and unknowable," then, since man *will* worship something, there are two substitutes possible; and these are nature-worship and hero-worship; or, as we ought perhaps to put them, nature worship and human-nature-worship. We shall take them in this order. *Nature-worship*, let it then be remembered, is in plain and unmistakable terms proposed. That is, if men have time for such a matter as worship. "Apart from Pessimism," says the author of "Natural Religion," "there is nothing to prevent the most exclusive votary of science from worshipping. Not at any rate because there is no God to worship is science tempted to renounce worship; but it may be

tempted by the necessity of concentration by the absorbing passion of analysis, by prudential limitation of the sphere of study, by a mistaken fear of the snares of imagination." * But even if scientific men have no time for acts of nature-worship, their scientific pursuits are, it appears, to be interpreted as nature's true and accepted worship. Thus another recent writer says, " Knowledge is the true prayer, the only one to which nature hearkens and responds, as the pursuit of knowledge is her true and accepted worship. By knowledge alone man has been delivered from the forces and scourges and fatalities of nature ; blind, and mighty, and destroying—fire and flood, lightning and tempest, plague and famine, shipwreck and untimely death. To appease the wrath of these awful and destructive powers of nature, the primitive man, supposing them deities or demons, in trembling fear built temples, and offered prayer and sacrifice of everything that could be conceived to appease offended deities, in vain ; while modern man, by a knowledge of nature's laws, not only averts her anger, but converts her most formidable forces into his powerful servants. Thus, by knowledge only he has performed the miracle of taming the blind and inanimate forces of nature, much more difficult to subdue than the animals or savage beasts, and utterly insensible to supplication, or prayer, or sacrifice. Let us only know her conditions, and accept them, and nature will be propitious indeed. Where she had else been our scourge and destroyer, she will give us all things liberally to enjoy. And who are they who have enabled us to placate nature, the priests of this true worship who have made atonement, the mediators between ordinary men and nature who have rendered her propitious ? The priests have been the discoverers and inventors in the

* Pp. 93-4.

sciences and the arts; the temples, nature herself; and the inner shrines where the worship has been carried on have been the laboratory and the observatory, the study of the natural philosopher and inventor, and the workshop of the engineer." *

§ 6. Nature-worship, then, let us understand, in a prayerless world is likely to degenerate into an individual pursuit of the knowledge of nature. Lyceum lectures will take the place of public worship. The priests of nature will prosecute her worship in their enshrined laboratories; and the common people will be invited to their *seances*. With more or less cordiality the priests will make their last discoveries public property, and doubtless for very tangible considerations. If the priest of nature be a poet into the bargain, like Goëthe, his worship may take the form of *art*, and he may give expression in rhythmic sentences to his admiration of the order of the universe. Or if he be a painter, he may embody upon canvas the impressions of beauty which nature has made upon him. But beyond this union at Lyceum lectures to admire nature and her priests in science and in art, there can in the very nature of the case be no religious communion or public worship among men. Admiration of order in these circumstances will be the solitary religious bond of society; and he would be a sanguine prophet who would predict society holding for any length of time together on such terms. Even supposing that our most magnificent churches, instead of being demolished because of their associations, were fitted up for scientific lectures, and art collections, and exhibitions of machinery, and that the priests of nature took the place of the ministers of God, could they hold the people in any kind of unity, or bind society together through rapture over

* Cf. Graham's "Creed of Science," p. 236.

the *cosmos*? If we may judge from the experience of the present, "the religion of the future" will not run any such career of popular influence and unifying power as Christianity has done. The knowledge of nature will be found an utterly insufficient basis for the union of mankind.

§ 7. It has indeed been urged that resignation and gratitude must be fostered by the knowledge of nature. To quote again from Mr. Graham: "Science will bring not only material, but spiritual comforts and alleviation. It will bring both truth and fruit; truth, in itself; fruit, from its indefinite adaptability to the material wants and wishes of man, as well as from its further application to the conduct of life. Science in itself is the true, in its application is the good. The truths of science will save you; in the sequel they will save the world; they alone can do so. They will save your soul, in the only sense in which it can be saved, by pointing out to it the right way of life; by giving to it a fuller, freer, better life on the earth, the only certain theatre of its existence and activity; by giving to it light; by supplying it with sustaining and strengthening truths;—in a word, by showing it the universal empire of law, which embraces both it and the cosmos, the knowledge of which is the sum of truth, and to accommodate ourselves to which is the sum of wisdom and virtue. And this truth will not only save you; it will set you free, as it is ever the work of truth to do. It will set you free by delivering you from the vain fears and terrors and superstitions which so long held the soul of man in degrading bondage, adding their formidable terrors to the miseries of life. It will further set you free within the bounds of natural law, by enabling you to accomplish your desired ends the surer the more you know the unvarying course of things; to which, on the one hand, your aims must be accom-

modated, but which, on the other, can be indefinitely turned to serve you. Our perturbed spirits shall at length find rest under the reign of ascertained truth, and universal, unvarying law. Our minds shall also be at peace with respect to the final insoluble mystery of the universe, into which not even the angels can penetrate. We shall give up the attempts to solve it, accepting it as a final fact, and being content with a knowledge of the general laws of phenomena. This knowledge of the order of the world—of what we can know, and of what we must be content to be ignorant of—will bring back to us our banished peace of mind. The sweet serenity of spirit, the most precious jewel of our souls, will return to us again. We shall take heart of grace ; and, knowing the liberal terms that nature allows to the wise, knowing at least more clearly than men ever knew before the conditions under which we live,—fixed and immutable in some directions, alterable in others, and by ourselves for our advantage,—we shall once again, as men born under former happy civilizations, put on a cheerful courage, and find enjoyment in existence. We shall no more go round bewailing our evil conditions, asking, Who will show us any good ? Our newborn pessimism shall disappear, direful and phantasmal as our old superstitions. The spirit of man shall get rest after its long and searching probation, after all this feverish agitation and disquietude, prolonged for three centuries, respecting the nature, the origin, and the final destination of the soul. Resignation, the last, the greatest, and most difficult of the virtues, will follow under the new dispensation of natural law holding all things, the world, and man, and society in its embrace. Resignation to the unalterable evils of life, which the old Stoic strenuously tried to inculcate upon himself, which the religion of Islam prescribes as its central precept,

which Christianity supplicates from Heaven, becomes almost for the first time a possible and natural frame of mind to man; the lesson of science being borne in upon his mind from all sides, and by countless instances, that the course of nature, the laws of the universe, and the laws of life, from which certain evils must result, are fixed and unalterable. It is natural, when we know that the order of the world is carried on under laws which will not change for our wishes or our prayers, to be resigned to the special evils which the general laws bring with them. It is natural to try to be resigned to the inevitable in any case, and it is wise; but when we learn that some of the inevitable ills are the result of general laws which bring a greater sum of good; that others of our ills are not inevitable, but reducible in amount through the beneficial help of these very invariable laws, and the unchanging nature of things and properties of matter; and that finally both the greater good, and the continual diminution of evil within limits, are only obtainable on the twofold condition of the invariability of the laws joined to our knowledge of them;—then the spirit of resignation to the order of things, which is demanded from us on account of the residuum of evil, becomes tempered with gratitude on account of the larger good.”*

§ 8. Now it will be needful to analyse such an assertion, and to be quite sure that a resigned and grateful world will result from a prayerless use of Nature. The author of “Natural Religion” acknowledges that Science has Nihilism to face, which refuses to see in civilization any progress, and wishes to overthrow it. Pessimism, let speculators blink it as they may, must wait as a spectre upon that philosophy which tells man to be resigned in the midst of

* “The Creed of Science,” pp. 229-231.

a terrible "struggle for existence." Resignation may be cultivated and preached by the *well-to-do* under such a system, but the unfortunate cannot attain unto it. Unless, then, there is some other consolation for struggling and disappointed men than the abstraction of a "reign of law," the vintage of *resignation* will be confined to sunlit zones of human experience.

§ 9. Again, when we turn to *gratitude*, we ask the pertinent question if such a grace be possible without a personal object or objects? There is a danger in such discussions of falling into loose expressions which will not bear analysis. Can we be grateful to such abstractions as nature, law, and order? Can we be grateful to a machine?—Not unless we personify it. We can be grateful to an animal, but the line must be drawn somewhere, and it is absolutely impossible to be grateful to the inanimate and impersonal. It is mere poetry to pretend anything else. Hence this gratitude, which it is alleged Nature, with her reign of invariable law, fosters, turns out to be an impossibility without a personal object. In fact, the prayerlessness supposed is the manifestation of a thankless spirit. It is acknowledged there is a Power at the back of nature, but forsooth because He is supposed to be "unknown and unknowable," therefore we will utter no thanks before Him, nor trouble ourselves with His praise. His blessings are to be received *as a matter of course*, and no expression of gratitude to be returned for them. A prayerless population in the very nature of things is a thankless population, and, like the nine lepers who went off from Jesus in possession of their cure, they imagine they are under no obligation to express their thanks.

§ 10. But farther, if men come to believe that they may take from the Power behind nature all He is willing

to afford without the trouble of thanks, will not the *discourtesy* filter downwards through society? The radicalism which insists on *not* fearing God will make short work in life's struggles with the honour of the king. Prayer ceasing in the highest plane of experience will be less and less in fashion in the lower. Courtesy, which is an exchange of prayers, as we shall afterwards see, will fall under the same ban, and there is nothing in the "reign of law" to hinder man deteriorating steadily towards the age of barbarism.

§ 11. But perhaps it will be said that, even supposing *nature-worship* had the effects alleged, *hero-worship* will surely mitigate or prevent them. From the worship of nature, therefore, we turn for a time to the worship of human nature, to see what form it will take and what influence it will exercise in the supposed prayerless future. We may, then, dismiss the worship of *humanity* as the worship of an abstraction which practically proves valueless. The admiration of a pure abstraction is utterly insufficient to occupy or to unite the individuals of the race. The object of worship must be concrete. What individuals, then, shall be the heroes of the new and prayerless time? Men can hardly be expected to worship the average individual; this would be tantamount to *self-worship*. Now it so happens that the heroic has hitherto taken what we may conveniently call the form of *inspiration*, and the mightiest men, even when not particularly pious, have acknowledged their obedience to some impulse from beyond and above. It is plain that in a prayerless world the prayerful heroes of the past, and even the heroes who believed only in their destiny and star, must give way to another class, to the scientific investigators who keep to nature, and worship nothing beyond her. The heroes of the eleventh chapter

of Hebrews, Christ Himself, the martyrs of the Christian faith, Luther, Knox, Milton, Cromwell, and such prayerful, meditative men even as Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, and Faraday, must give way to heroes of a prayerless type. We do not profess to furnish the new list. It seems to us that the prayerless *heroes* have yet to be manufactured, and that the attention of *savans* should be directed especially to this matter. A world without prayer will need some compensation in the heroism of individual lives, but if all wisdom has concentrated into the idea of making life more comfortable through the prosecution of the study of nature, it is hard to see on what terms our heroes can be made. If resignation is not certain under the reign of changeless law, self-sacrifice, which we take to be of the essence of heroism, is not likely to be largely practised.

§ 12. But in addition it is to be observed that in limiting mankind to hero-worship, our *savans* are really blocking up the path of human progress. For in order to progress and mental satisfaction, we must have before us a Being so absolutely perfect, that we can never overtake Him, but can only follow after Him. Suppose that in its advancement the race came abreast of all its historic heroes—a supposition not extravagant, surely, in an age of purely scientific progress—and no being could be discerned above the average and educated individual, it is plain that the stationary state would at once be realized, and progress, of necessity, must cease. We need, then, something more than the prayerless heroes, if human progress is to proceed. We need a Being who will remain high as a star above us at every possible stage in our advancement; a Being who will be above our criticism; a Being whom to appreciate is to adore; then, and then only, is the progress of the race assured for evermore. But let the conviction be borne in upon us that

such a Being is beyond our range, outside all possibility of fellowship, and the foundations are laid broad and deep of despair. Hence we see that by no human effort can deterioration be prevented upon the prayerless principle supposed.

§ 13. A prayerless world, then, can at best be but a huge workshop where nature undergoes perpetual analysis in the hope of making life more joyous. Her bounties, taken as a mere matter of course, will in such circumstances prove but a premium to the skilful and the strong. The struggle for existence will, as a principle, know no abatement, and the weaker will go with less pity and compunction to the wall. The heroic will have little field of operation; the gospel of "comfort" will have usurped the place of the gospel of self-sacrificing love; and man's deterioration must result. Hence the question we are discussing is momentous. We believe that human welfare is bound up with it, and that it is of the last importance that the reasonableness of prayer should, if possible, be exhibited. To this we consequently would address ourselves.

CHAPTER III.
THE METHOD OF DISCUSSION.



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§ 1. WE have already seen that the questions claiming decision in this discussion are, Is it reasonable to believe that a personal God exists? and if so, can He reward those who diligently seek Him? It is plain, therefore, that we must start with an inquiry into the existence of *persons*. Can their existence be known? and if so, how? Now by persons we do not mean the *bodies* of individuals. The personality and the corporeal person are totally distinct, and they should not be confounded. The following quotation from an able writer will put the exact meaning to be attached to "person" clearly before us. "The relation of our word 'person' to the Latin word *persona*, both as regards sound and sense, is very apparent. The latter word meant a mask, such as is worn by an actor, and was so called from the mouthpiece through which the actor's voice sounded. This mouthpiece was artificially constructed so as to increase the volume of sound. Next, the word meant a part or character played by an actor. Then, the word is transferred to the stage of life, and means the part or character sustained by any one in the world, especially a character implying outward position or dignity. Finally, it was applied to a person or personage as an individual man, although, in almost all cases, with a tacit reference to station or character.

The later use of the word *persona* by the Roman lawyers of the Empire comes nearer to the modern signification of the word person. It meant any human being, and was opposed to the word *res*, a thing, a chattel. In this meaning it included all men, whether free or enslaved, dependent or independent, and implied the possession by all of rights and of consequent obligations. Thus it recognized man as a free agent, and therefore entitled to different treatment from a chattel. These rights might be artificially limited by slavery, but were always latent and inherent. And thus we find that freedom, and the capability of sustaining legal and moral relations to others, are the essential points common to *persona* and person." *

§ 2. We desire, then, to ascertain how the existence of persons, understanding thereby realized personalities, can be known. They do not reveal themselves directly to our sense-perception; however little we may realize the fact, we can only reach the knowledge of their existence by an exercise of reason; and the only method open to us is that of ANALOGY. Starting with our own personality, of which we are assured through self-consciousness, we reason analogically towards the existence of other personalities. At first sight, it seems strange to be assured that we do not perceive persons by the exercise of sense-perception, but a little clear thinking convinces us that we are led analogically to their existence from certain signs which we meet in the world of sense.

§ 3. The argument which we consciously or unconsciously conduct is from the known in ourselves to the unknown in others. Self-consciousness assures us of our own personality, and we assure ourselves next of the personality of others from the sensible signs, similar to those we produce

* Cf. Bathgate's "Deep Things of God," p. 52.

ourselves, of which they must be the source. We regard this position, which is virtually laid down by Bishop Berkeley in his "Minute Philosopher," as unassailable.* Now we must be quite decided upon the subject of our own personality. Such writers as Hume, Mill, and Bain have tried to dispense with it, and to substitute for it such phrases as a "bundle of states," "permanent possibilities of sensation," and such like; but it will be found on carefully analysing their arguments that they assume the very thing they are so anxious to deny. As an acute writer has said of the works of Bain, "Hundreds of sentences might be quoted in which the real mystery of the Ego is quietly assumed, and then made to assist in its own assassination."† We are conscious of *sensations* and of a *subject* who receives and analyses these sensations. This subject or Ego can take up the sensations for analysis or lay them down according to pleasure; and, so far from being a mere effect of *physical* states, can tax the physical energies up to exhaustion or abstain from doing so, by virtue of its own inherent *spiritual* nature. While allied to our physical nature, our personality can take command of it, and need not be its slave. Of *spiritual* as distinct from *physical energy*, we are assured by self-consciousness.‡

§ 4. Besides, it is a mistake to imagine that we have our physical nature more directly under our observation than our spiritual nature, or that physiology, rather than self-consciousness, will give us the true insight into ourselves. Take the case of our brain, for example, the organ of thought. It is not a matter of observation with any of us.

* Cf. Dial. iv., § 4, 5, etc.

† "Personality, the Beginning and End of Metaphysics and a necessary Assumption in all Positive Philosophy," pp. 36-37.

‡ Cf. Graham's "Creed of Science," pp. 337-344.

We find brains in the skulls of the dead, and by experiments upon animals we are led to the conclusion that certain lobes and portions of the brain are connected with certain mental acts and states ; but, so far as our own brain is concerned, we are left entirely to *analogy* for any knowledge regarding it.* It is plain, therefore, that for the knowledge of our own personality we have the certainties of self-consciousness, while for the knowledge of the connection of our personality with our physical nature we are left entirely to analogical reasoning.

§ 5. If, then, analogy enters so largely into the knowledge of our own complex nature, we cannot be surprised if it plays a chief part in our knowledge of others. We reason analogically from the relations in which we find ourselves to other personalities as occupying similar relations. Subject to certain sensations, we are led to attribute these to personalities akin to our own, because we have originated similar signs ourselves. We posit personalities like our own because our own personality has been the source of similar signs. We interpret the credentials, which the world of sense furnishes, as belonging to personalities similarly related to the world of sense with ourselves.

§ 6. When further we analyse what it is we posit as personalities, we find they are reproductions of our own personality with the requisite modifications. So plain is this that the "history of consciousness" has been voted an absurdity on the ground that we simply translate our own developed consciousness to the different points in the history, and imagine how we should think, feel, and act in the altered circumstances. In the very same way *all the knowledge we have of the consciousness of lower animals*

* Cf. "Theism and Modern Science," two Sermons by Dr. George Salmon, p. 26.

is from analogy. We simply manipulate our own consciousness imaginatively to suit what we believe to have been, or to be, the animal's conditions, and then we attribute this to the animal. To be absolutely certain of the animal's consciousness we would require to become incarnated in him. Only by a metempsychosis could absolutely certain knowledge in natural history be secured. Yet analogy supplies us with sufficient knowledge of the lower animals to guide us in our conduct towards them. While it is possible to say that animals *may* be mere machines, and may only *simulate* the pain human beings in analogous circumstances *feel*, the argument from analogy will always, we believe, be strong enough to determine the common sense of disinterested parties.*

§ 7. It is plain, then, that the only way in which we reach the knowledge of other beings is by reasoning analogically from ourselves. Finding within ourselves an element of animality as well as of spirituality, we pass analogically to some knowledge of animal and spiritual beings. Certain signs are laid before us in the world of sense,—signs of animality, or signs of intelligence, affection, and will; and we form our notion of the sources of these signs from the knowledge of ourselves. We place certain animals below ourselves because of the signs they exhibit not coming up to our own standard in the matter of intelligence. But our knowledge of them is purely analogical. We modify our own nature by an effort of imagination, and attribute this to the beasts. Our animal nature brings us so far into relation to the lower animals that we are able to form some conception of what their animal life must be.

§ 8. But our main concern is with the other side of the

* Cf. Prof. Huxley's lecture, "Are Animals Automata?"

analogical argument. If it be possible for us on the ground of what we know ourselves as animals to be to reach analogically some knowledge of beings lower in the scale, it is also possible for us to reach some knowledge of beings above us in the scale. We shall begin with our knowledge of more highly endowed *men*, and see where the argument leads us. We take up, for instance, a mathematical work of the highest order, we read a sufficient way in it to convince us of the author's intellectual power; and, if our mathematical reading has not been kept up, we soon get face to face with difficulties which are to our unaided minds insurmountable. What is the conclusion to which we come regarding the author? Not that he must have blundered, since we are unable to understand him, but that he is immeasurably our superior in mathematical attainments and powers. We enlarge our conceptions of his intellectual capacity. His intelligence we see is the same in *kind* with our own, but we cheerfully acknowledge a great difference in *degree*. Or we take up a poem, or a work of fiction; we see in it evidences of emotion; and we reason analogically to the author's great emotional and imaginative power. Or we are introduced to the presence of some gigantic enterprise, and see how many individuals are clustered round a single "moving spirit," as he is called; and we recognize in him an embodiment of will-power of the same kind as our own will-power, but vastly greater in degree. It is thus by analogy that we realize the existence of men more highly endowed than ourselves. We interpret the signs which they hang out before us in the world of sense through our knowledge of ourselves.

§ 9. The world of sense, therefore, really consists of *signs* hung out before our personalities to be *analogically* interpreted. These signs are of various kinds; some are

gross signs of mere animal existences, some are embodiments of intellectual, emotional, or imaginative power; some are embodiments of will, and some may be complex, embodying several of these elements; but as we stand before the panorama of the world, we interpret analogically as carefully as we can, and people the universe with individuals to whom we attribute those qualities whose signs have been exhibited before us.

§ 10. Not only so, but we may be led to attribute several qualities to an individual, although we have seen but the sign of one quality, because in ourselves we have seen these qualities inseparably associated. Let us again advert to the illustration from mathematics. The mathematical work contains signs of great *intellectual* power; but there may not be a trace of *emotion* in it from beginning to end. We might indeed say, as a literal fact, that it is a *heartless* book. But we should not be warranted in concluding that its author is a *heartless man*. He could very easily vindicate his character if we were foolish enough on such a ground to impugn it. He could remind us that mathematical works, though written *con amore*, are not intended as vehicles of emotion. He could affirm with truth that they are written to promote science, and not to manifest character; and that in the fields of practical life and activity he can be as sympathetic as his critics. That is to say, we are bound to reason from signs of intelligence when appearing alone to the possession of good-heartedness as well, unless there is some distinct evidence to the contrary.

§ 11. The question now comes before us, How far can we safely carry this analogical reasoning? We have seen that by means of it we reach the conviction that men of vastly greater endowment than ourselves have existed, and

are existing round about us. Must we stop with men, and drop our method of analogy, or ought we to go farther? We have already seen that by analogy we can reach a considerable knowledge of the animals below us; and by the same method we can attain to a considerable knowledge of men above us in the scale of existence; and there is no reason why, if we meet manifest signs of superhuman intelligence, emotion, and will, we should not reason analogically towards superior beings or a Superior Being embodying these qualities. Committed to analogical reasoning for our knowledge of *all* beyond our sensations, we have no alternative but to accept of the situation, and carry out honestly the analogies to their consequences.

§ 12. Are there, then, any such signs of superhuman intelligence, sensibility, and will forced upon our attention which we are bound analogically to interpret? Giving man full credit for his share in civilization, do we find evidence of an intelligence and of a will beyond and above the human? Into all the evidence of the superhuman we cannot of course enter, but we can indicate where the evidence is to be found in abundance such as no sane person can doubt. *Nature*, we maintain, is a sign of superhuman intelligence. For what is the *postulate* with which every investigator of nature consciously or unconsciously begins? It is that nature is *intelligible*. "The real aim of the scientist," says a most able living writer, "though often he is not fully conscious of it, is to detect the reason in things. He assumes that nature is not merely a complex of phenomena; it is also a rational system. Nature is concrete reason. In brief, every attempt to form a theory of things assumes that the world is composed of intelligible elements in intelligible relations. This assumption cannot be escaped by any philosophical school what-

ever.”* Let any one, then, starting with this idea, consider how small a way the human mind has really got in the interpretation of nature; how that instead of human knowledge converging towards completion, it has really to face a problem diverging and continually enlarging itself, “the supply of new and unexplained facts being divergent in extent, so that the more we have explained, the more there is to explain;” † and a superhuman source for nature must analogically be posited. Nature is a sign of inconceivably greater intelligence than the human race has ever exhibited. It has taxed the intellects of men for millenniums, and they are only on the threshold of interpretation. To take the step analogy suggests is surely eminently reasonable! For the evidence is this: nature is thinkable, the more we investigate it the more intelligible it appears. But thought does not inhabit the air; it is not in nature, but in mind. Nature consists of things, not thoughts; things, which express thoughts. Where are these thoughts to be found? Not surely in those only who *discovered* them, but in a Being or beings above and before the scientific discoverers, and embodying superhuman intelligence. And we need hardly use the plural number to detain us from the single and superhuman source, for one of the great generalisations of the time is the *unity of nature*, so far pointing to a single mind as its source.

§ 13. There is only one possible objection to this reasoning from analogy in the present instance, and it is this, that in ourselves we have a physical as well as a spiritual part, which physical part constitutes our *nevus* with the sur-

* Cf. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," p. 119.

† Cf. Jevons's "Principles of Science," second edition, p. 753.

rounding world, while in the intellectual and moral being analogy suggests as the source of nature we have the spiritual only. But the question when properly regarded resolves itself into this, Have we any example of the spiritual acting directly upon the physical? This is the kernel of the whole debate, and we unhesitatingly answer that we have examples of this in the *action of our own personality upon our physical nature*. We are conscious of a spiritual personality acting directly on a physical environment. As a living anatomist has put it in speaking of the relations of brain to mind: "At any moment, without change of external circumstances, the volition can initiate physical operations leading to movements of the body, and similarly can stop the same, and must, therefore, start the brain-changes which are its own necessary accompaniment."* This undoubted fact, revealed by every one's self-consciousness, constitutes the real analogue for the action of a pure spirit in nature. Moreover, had this fact been appreciated as it ought to have been, it would have saved us from confusion on the part of some of the apologists. A recent writer has undertaken the defence of "The Efficacy of Prayer," and it really amounts to the assertion that every answer to prayer involves a *miracle*, which he defines as the production by volition of an immediate external result.† The "Divine volition" is brought in by him as if it were a new physical antecedent, and it does duty, he conceives, miraculously. But this merely mystifies the subject. The operation of spirit on matter directly is *not* miraculous. We are living examples of this ourselves. Spiritual energy within us is constantly

* Professor Clelland, quoted in Professor Maguire's Lecture on "Some Facts of Perception and their Significance," p. 28.

† Cf. Jellett's "Efficacy of Prayer," p. 41, etc.

controlling and regulating physical energy, as well as, of course, being affected by it in return. Hence as compound beings we can reason analogically upwards towards pure spirit just as well as downwards towards pure animality.

§ 14. Our argument thus far has been from nature, as an expression of superhuman intelligence. But we might argue similarly from nature as the embodiment of superhuman *force*. That the forces of nature are superhuman will be granted by all. That force is the central idea in our present interpretation of nature let our "dynamical theories" declare. But when we analyse the idea of force, we find that it is derived from our own consciousness of *will-power*. The most careful observers admit this.* The difficulty experienced is in dissociating force from some will-power. Trace within the arts and sciences the manifestations of force, and a *will* is found to be at the start of them. Within the human limits force is the expression of will. And this leads us analogically to connect nature's inconceivably vast forces with an inconceivably powerful will. For will is force regulated by intelligence, and this is characteristic of nature's forces. "Intellect," says Dr. Martineau, "is not the only element of human nature which may be taken as type of the Divine, and as furnishing a possible solution to the problem of origination. Quitting the two poles of extreme philosophy, confessedly incompetent in the separation, we submit that WILL presents the middle point, which takes up into itself thought on the one hand and force on the other; and which yet, so far from appearing to us as a *compound* arising out of them as an effect, is more

* Cf. Hume's "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding," sec. vii.; also Wallace on "Natural Selection," pp. 366-8; and Carpenter's "Human Physiology," § 585.

easily conceived than either as the originating prefix of all phenomena." *

§ 15. We are, then, constrained by analogy to posit a Being behind nature possessed of superhuman intelligence and will. He hangs out His signs in nature, and summons His intelligent inferiors to interpret them. His intelligence and His will power are the same in kind with ours, but differ inconceivably in degree. To this a general objection is taken as being *anthropomorphism*. But a word must not alarm us on the way of truth. As we have seen, the only way in which we can reach the knowledge of beings beyond ourselves is by analogy. If we are to think of the superhuman at all, it must be in terms of the human spirit. Just as we must analogically modify our consciousness to get some conception of the beings below us, so must we in the opposite direction modify our consciousness to get some conception of the Being above us. We must, in this case, take man's good qualities and magnify them to the utmost, and confess that after all the Infinite is beyond and above our very best conceptions. Besides, *the objections taken to anthropomorphic conceptions of God are as analogical as those they are meant to overthrow.*† To represent personality, sensibility, and will as limitations of the Infinite is to affirm that impersonality, insensibility, and passivity would be no limitations. But the comparison is essentially analogical, and clear thinking can come to no other conclusion than that personality, sensibility, and will are no limitations of being, but enlargements, and that it is impersonality, insensibility, and passivity which, if attributed to the Infinite, would make Him an object of compassion and of pity with such beings as men. Samson, as he ground corn in the prison-house for the Philistines, poor and blind, is

* "Essays," vol. ii., p. 188.

† Appendix. Note B.

not so sad a spectacle as the impersonal, insensible, and passive unity which certain philosophers would persuade us is the basal unity of all.

§ 16. We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the existence of the Infinite Spirit is reached along the same line of analogy as the existence of the finite personalities around us. Each has his signs hung out in the sensible sphere to be interpreted by kindred personalities. We must either accept the situation and argue from the signs to intelligences kindred to our own, or decline interpretation on the inferior analogy that chance has determined all things, and that there is no reason at the back of things. The alternative of chance or of a Supreme Intelligence is based upon corresponding analogies ; but our experience of so-called chance is not sufficient to support the belief that the universe arose through it. We feel, consequently, that the most reasonable view is that which analogy suggests, that there is a unity of intelligence and of moral qualities down the scale of existence. Intelligence and moral feeling, wherever met, are the same in kind, but they differ widely in degree. We posit a Supreme Intelligence and Will as at the back of nature, and regard this as more reasonable than any rival theory of things.*

* The following quotation from Archbishop King's "Essay on the Origin of Evil" will serve to place the argument from analogy in a clear light. He says : "That we must judge of the nature and perfections of the Deity, only by that nature and those perfections which we derive from Him, is, I think, very plain ; I mean, that we must not endeavour to conceive the several attributes of God by *substituting* something in him of a *quite different kind, and totally diverse* from that which we find in ourselves, even though that could be in some respects similar and *analogous* to this ; but we are to suppose somewhat of the very *same kind and sort*, the same qualities and properties in general to be both in Him

and in us, and then remove all manner of *defect* or *imperfection* which attends the particular *modus* or degree of their existence, as they are in us. Thus we ascribe to God all kinds of apparent perfection observable in His creatures, except such as argue at the same time imperfection (*v.g.*, motion, which necessarily implies limitation), or are inconsistent with some other and greater perfection (*v.g.*, materiality, which excludes knowledge and liberty). We also remove from Him all *want*, *dependence*, *alteration*, *uneasiness*, *etc.* In short, all that results either from simple finiteness, or from the mere union of two finite imperfect substances, such as constitute man. And when we have thus applied everything in every manner of existence which seems to imply perfection, and excluded everything in every manner of existence which implies or includes the contrary, we have got our idea of an absolutely perfect Being, which we call God. 'Tis therefore attributing to God some real qualities of a certain determinate kind (*v.g.*, knowledge or power, goodness or truth), the nature of which qualities we do perceive, are directly conscious of, and *know*, which gives us an idea or conception of Him, and a *proper* one too (if any such distinction of ideas were allowed), and not imagining some others, we cannot tell of what sort, totally different in nature and kind from any that we ever did perceive or know; which would give us no idea or conception at all of Him, either proper or improper. In like manner we frame a partial conception of a spirit in general (which we confessedly have), not by substituting some properties *different in kind* from those which we perceive in our own spirit, but by supposing the very *same* properties, *i.e.*, in *kind* (*viz.*, *thought* and *action*), to be also inherent in some other immaterial beings, which we therefore call by the same names. Now this is (as far as it goes) true, real knowledge, and may be applied and argued on intelligibly."

PART II.

Efficacious Prayer a Law of Nature.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF LAW.



CHAPTER IV.

THE REIGN OF LAW.

§ 1. **W**E have seen from our previous inquiries that it is eminently reasonable to believe in the existence of a personal God, whose nature is akin to our own, though inconceivably superior in degree. We have now to enter upon the second question, "Can He reward those who diligently seek Him?" And in this second part of our treatise we propose to show that "Efficacious Prayer" is actually embraced in the general scheme of nature. But before reaching this important fact, it will be needful for us to analyse as clearly as we can the phrase "Reign of Law," since the existence thereof in nature is held to prove responses to prayer impossible. That this is a fair statement of the objection to prayer will appear from the following quotation:—"Observation," says Professor Tyndall, "tends to chasten the emotions and to check those structural efforts of the intellect which have emotion for their base. One by one natural phenomena have been associated with their proximate causes; and the idea of direct personal volition mixing itself in the economy of nature is retreating more and more . . . We have ceased to propitiate the powers of nature—ceased even to pray for things in *manifest* contradiction to natural laws. In Protestant countries, at least, I think it is conceded that

the age of miracles is past. . . . This principle ['The Conservation of Energy'] asserts that no power can make its appearance in nature without an equivalent expenditure of some other power; that natural agents are so related to each other as to be mutually convertible, but that no new agency is created. Light runs into heat; heat into electricity; electricity into magnetism; magnetism into mechanical force; and mechanical force again into light and heat. The Proteus changes, but He is ever the same; and His changes in nature, supposing no miracle to supervene, are the expression, not of spontaneity, but of physical necessity. . . . The dispersion, therefore, of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal would be as much a miracle as the rolling of the Rhone over the Grimsel precipices, down the valley of Hasli to Meyringen and Brientz."* The idea, consequently, is that in nature we find such a "Reign of Law" as forbids the possibility of prayer receiving any answer in the physical domain. This is left to what is here called "physical necessity," and we are not warranted to look therein for any "special volition of the Eternal." We are warranted, therefore, in regarding the fact of a "Reign of Law" as the one great ground for existing scepticism about efficacious prayer.

§ 2. We proceed then to analyse the term "Reign of Law." What is law? "In its primary signification," says the Duke of Argyll, "a 'law' is the authoritative expression of human will enforced by power. The instincts of mankind, finding utterance in their language, have not failed to see that the phenomena of nature are only really conceivable to us as in like manner the expressions of a will enforcing itself with power. But, as in many other cases,

* "Fragments of Science," vol. ii. "Reflections on Prayer and Natural Law."

the secondary or derivative senses of the word have supplanted the primary signification ; and law is now habitually used by men who deny the analogy on which that use is founded, and to the truth of which it is an abiding witness."* His Grace accordingly proceeds to give five secondary senses in which the term "law" is used by scientific men.† But the preliminary question alone concerns us in this stage of our discussion—viz., What this "Reign of Law" really is? Where is it located? Has law a throne? Is its empire recognized as having a local habitation as well as a name? And we are forced to the conclusion that we have in the terms a mere *abstraction* derived from the nature of things instead of something imposed upon them. "Still more misleading," says Professor B. P. Bowne, "is the persistent tendency to take abstractions for things, which is so marked a feature of the human mind. We need not go back to the scholastics for illustrations. Such phrases as natural law, or the reign of law, are excellent examples. The bulk of the statements in which such phrases enter, assume that law is a real sovereign, enthroned no one knows exactly where, probably in the neighbourhood of Plato's ideas, but at all events actually regnant over reality. If anything happens, it is in obedience to law. If anything is to be explained, law is the magic word which makes all clear. Many who would guard themselves against this hypostasis of an abstraction in the case of derived phenomenal laws, would still fall a prey to it in the case of the laws of motion. They must certainly be held as determining all space-changes by an inherent necessity which cannot be infringed. Nothing is easier, as nothing is more common, than to regard these laws as primal necessities which material things, at least, cannot but obey. And just as

* "The Reign of Law," 5th edition, p. 64. † Appendix. Note C.

these laws are hypostatized, and reality is made subject to them, so also rational and ethical truths are erected into a realm of necessity which would exist if all reality were away. Nevertheless, a little reflection will convince us, at least in the case of natural laws, that we here fall a prey to our own abstractions. No law of nature is the antecedent, but the consequent, of reality. The so-called laws of attraction and repulsion are but results of the inner nature of things. Their rate of variation, also, is but a result of what the things are. Even the laws of motion are far enough from being either rational or ontological necessities. They are but the outcome of the nature of material things, which might conceivably have been altogether different. This is palpably the case with the more complex derived laws. Instead of expressing what things must be, they only reveal what things are. All natural laws, then, must be regarded as consequences of reality, and never as its foundation. Still, so easily do we mistake abstractions for things, that after we have abstracted the law from the action of things, we next regard the things as the subjects, if not the products, of the laws which they themselves underlie. It is only one step more on the same road to regard these laws as existing before all reality as the expressions of some all-controlling necessity. When reality appears, it has nothing to do but to fall into the forms which these sovereign laws prescribe. Thus the cause is made subject to the effect, and reality is explained as the result of its own consequences."*

§ 3. The "Reign of Law" is, therefore, no new empire which science has discovered where something called law is sovereign and all things must submit to its necessary

* "Studies in Theism," pp. 329-330; cf. also his "Metaphysics," p. 239.

sway, but a figurative expression for a conclusion to which investigators have come on the grounds of *analogy*. To read some of the "rhetorical flummery" which has been written on this subject, one would suppose that science was, like another Alexander, at the end of the world of possible investigation, and had mastered the entire system of laws. The fact is, on the other hand, that we can still most truthfully use the language of Bishop Butler and say, "It is then but an exceeding little way, and in but a very few respects, that we can trace up the natural course of things before us, to general laws. And it is only from analogy that we conclude the whole of it to be capable of being reduced into them; only from our seeing, that part is so. It is from our finding that the course of nature, in some respects and so far, goes on by general laws, that we conclude this of the rest."* So far, then, from the "Reign of Law" being some new necessity under which a scientific generation feel they have come, it is simply the expression of a general conclusion deduced from the realities around us, and which existed from the first. We are under no new bondage through the discovery; nay, we shall find as we proceed that knowledge has enlarged our liberty. We are bound, therefore, to resist the tyranny of a mere abstract phantom, and must assign it to its proper place among the deductions of logic, instead of among "the principalities and powers" which govern the universe.

§ 4. In like manner, we must not attribute to such a term as "natural law" functions which it cannot possess. "The laws of nature," says the late Professor Jevons, "as I venture to regard them, are simply general propositions concerning the correlation of properties which have been observed to hold true of bodies hitherto observed. On the

* "Analogy," part II., chap. iv., § 3.

assumption that our experience is of adequate extent, and that no arbitrary interference takes place, we are then able to assign the probability, always less than certainty, that the next object of the same apparent nature will conform to the same laws. . . . A second and very serious misapprehension concerning the import of a law of nature may now be pointed out. It is not uncommonly supposed that a law determines the character of the results which shall take place, as, for instance, that the law of gravity determines what force of gravity shall act upon a given particle. Surely a little reflection must render it plain that a law by itself determines nothing. It is *law plus agents obeying law which has results*, and it is no function of law to govern or define the number and place of its own agents. Whether a particle of matter shall gravitate, depends not only upon the law of Newton, but also upon the distribution of surrounding particles. The theory of gravitation may perhaps be true throughout all time and in all parts of space, and the Creator may never find occasion to create those possible exceptions to it which I have asserted to be conceivable. Let this be as it may; our science cannot certainly determine the question. Certain it is, that the law of gravity does not alone determine the forces which may be brought to bear at any point of space. The force of gravitation acting upon any particle depends upon the mass, distance, and relative position of all the other particles of matter within the bounds of space at the instant in question. Even assuming that all matter when once distributed though space at the Creation was thenceforth to act in an invariable manner without subsequent interference, yet the actual configuration of matter at any moment, and the consequent results of the law of gravitation, must have been entirely a matter of free choice.* It will thus appear

* "Principles of Science," pp. 738-40.

that there is very great danger indeed of our attributing to law prerogatives which it cannot sustain. To attribute, for example, *Creation* to law is a mere confusion of thought. Law is no such factor as could at all fulfil such a function as creation. A Creator may regulate his acts by certain intelligible principles which we denominate "laws," but he could not delegate creative functions to laws. It will be found, therefore, that at the bottom of the notion that "law alone" could account for the cosmos there is a radical confusion of thought. It is endowing a mere abstraction with the functions of the Creator, to dispense, if possible, with His presence altogether. When Mr. A. R. Wallace states his belief in the possibility of "creation by law," and asserts, on the ground of an *analogy borrowed from mechanics*, "I, for one, cannot believe that the world would come to chaos if left to law alone," he is really ventilating a mere private *opinion*, and attributing to law more power than it can possibly possess.*

§ 5. It would appear, then, that in "law" and the "reign of law," there is really no rival invested with independent powers and disputing the sovereignty of a personal God. Only confused thinking would attribute to such abstractions the plenary powers which are supposed to make a personal governor superfluous. And even these conclusions of confused thought are reached by the selfsame road as we have already pointed out, that of *analogy*. But the analogy is taken from the coarsest human inventions.† Because man can make machines which can go a considerable time alone, and so can leave the machine without anxiety or attention for a certain period, therefore it is argued that if nature re-

* "On Natural Selection," p. 281.

† Cf. Bowne's "Metaphysics," p. 320.

ceives continual attention from its Creator, and if its laws are not self-enclosed and self-regulating, then He must be inferior in His aims to terrestrial mechanics. If the Cosmos can thus be represented as going alone, the exclusion of the infinite mind is so far secured. Now we make bold to affirm first that the highest conception of the Infinite is *not* this of a mechanic who can construct a machine which can go alone for a definite period. As we are shut up to analogical reasoning in the matter, we are bound to take the very highest conception which analogy affords. Is the supposed mechanic the highest? Most assuredly not! The mechanic constructs his machine to *save himself from labour and from care*. He does by machinery what would speedily overtax both body and mind. The self-regulating powers with which intelligence endows machinery are to save attention and the wear and tear of details. Suppose, then, an infinitely wise and powerful mechanic who constructs a machine so perfectly that it can go for untold ages alone, never needing what Professor Tyndall calls "special volition," and so enabling the almighty mechanic to enjoy everlasting holiday; is this, we ask, the highest type of a personal Being we can form out of the analogue in human nature? The fact is, this old deistic idea which confronts us in a scientific fashion now is the enlargement of the eighteenth century conception of "an independent gentleman," and is "anthropomorphism" with a vengeance. We can surely out of the sympathy and philanthropy of our nineteenth century civilization form a higher conception than this! Our best men are not persons who have nothing to do. It is only ignorance which envies the idle. A person, who could plan himself out of the possibility of occupation, would be suspected at once of insanity. In an essay on "The Goodness of Good Amusements," a transatlantic writer

gives the following, which may help to clear up the weakness of the mechanical conception with which we are now dealing. "The hard-working lawyer was mistaken when he called the idler a happy man. He was going down to the law courts one day in term time, and not in as good spirits for his work as usual, when he met an acquaintance of his who never did anything in life except live about town. 'Happy fellow,' cried the lawyer to him, 'you have no law terms to keep.' 'Ah,' replied the idler with a sigh, 'I have no vacations.' The idler was suffering the penalty of the violated law of his nature. Perpetual idleness is a miserable life." * Will we, then, ignore the appetite of healthy and noble men for *work*, and deny this to the Deity? Will we imagine for a moment that He has planned Himself out of the universe as a superfluous factor, and indulges in Oriental idleness as the happiness of an intellectual and moral Being? It is crude anthropomorphism like this against which clear thinking protests.

§ 6. We deny, then, that the universe is a machine self-regulative and self-sustaining. We pronounce the abstraction "reign of law" a phantom which may terrify the imagination of superficial minds, but which must be set down as a simple *analogical deduction* from the reality of things, to which there is at least one notable exception. For as part of the universe ourselves, we are conscious that we are *not* mere machines, that the automatism which is predicated of animals and insinuated about men is in direct conflict with the testimony of self-consciousness, the only witness competent in the case. In human nature, therefore, the mechanical conception breaks down, and an element of liberty asserts itself, of which we shall presently speak

* Cf. "Satan as a Moral Philosopher, with other Essays and Sketches," by C. S. Henry, D.D., New York, 1877, pp. 161-2.

more particularly. It is by such facts, therefore, that the relation of God to the universe must be determined.

§ 7. What is God's relation, then, to the laws of His universe? The whole analogy goes to show that we are bound to regard them as the expressions and realizations of His will. Nature, in her system of laws, is thus an expression of the Divine Mind. But among these laws we must recognize "the law of liberty," and contemplate the system as including freedom. *We recognize no necessity which is not compatible with the fact of freedom.* We feel that under God we are meant to be free. He does not move puppets in His magnificent plan, but deals as moral Governor with creatures who are free. As the Governor of free beings, He surely occupies a higher place in thought than as a mighty Mechanician who once gave a start to a mere machine, which has gone without Him since!

§ 8. Besides, when this view is taken, then the "uniformity of nature" and its "persistence" receive a rational basis. Nature's uniformity is the expression of God's faithfulness. The laws work with regularity because He would not put us to mental confusion. There is persistence in the system, because He would encourage our comprehension of it, and never feels jealous of the vastest previsions. Dr. Mozley, in his admirable Bampton Lecture on "Miracles," ventured to affirm that there is no *rational* ground for our belief in the uniformity of nature.* And notwithstanding the criticism to which his work was subjected by Professor Tyndall, it is as clear as noonday that *so far* Mozley was right. But what has no ground in reason alone has its ground in *ethics*, and our faith in nature's constancy becomes reasonable when founded on the faithfulness of a personal

* Second Edition, p. 39.

God, who will not put His creatures to intellectual confusion.*

§ 9. But it will be asked, "How about the doctrine of the conservation of energy? Does it not forbid the possibility of any Divine agency in the universe at present?" As stated by rhetoricians, it would seem to assert such an impossibility; but here again careful thinking will dissipate confusion. What is, then, the doctrine of conservation of energy? Simply that the sum of the *physical* energies of the universe is believed to be a constant quantity. It is admitted that the proof of the doctrine is not a rigorous demonstration like a proposition in Euclid, but simply an indirect proof by supposing it true and verifying it by ascertained results. "Numberless instances occur," says Professor Balfour Stewart, "in which we are enabled to predict what will happen by assuming the truth of the laws of energy; in other words, these laws are proved to be true in all cases where we can put them to the test of rigorous experiment, and probably we can have no better proof than this of the truth of such a principle"† But it must be plain that such a doctrine affords no ground for dogmatism about *spiritual* energy. "It is a vexatiously common error with semi-scientific speculators," says Professor Bowne, "to affirm the doctrine of conservation to be absolute, and then to conclude that there can be no vital or spontaneous agents in the system. The fallacy is evident, for it consists in deducing the premises from the conclusion which, in turn, is true only on the preassumed truth of the premises."‡ It is evident, therefore, that until it is *proved*

* Cf. "The Unseen Universe," First Edition, p. 60; also Bowne's "Metaphysics," pp. 461, 474, 480.

† "The Conservation of Energy," pp. 85-86.

‡ "Studies in Theism," p. 212.

that thought is a mere form of physical energy, and volition a mere effect of physical antecedents rather than a spiritual energy directing energies that are physical, this doctrine of conservation cannot embrace or annihilate the field of spiritual energy. Such assertions as that thought is material will be found on analysis to be unwarranted contradictions of self-consciousness.* Hence we come to the clear conclusion that for a man to flourish such a doctrine as the "conservation of energy" in our faces, as if it excluded either Divine or human volition in the system of nature, is either to calculate upon the simplicity of opponents, or to impose upon himself.

§ 10. We come consequently to the conclusion that so far as law obtains in the universe, it is the expression of the Divine will; the abstraction "reign of law" simply resolves itself into the "reign of God by law"; the uniformity of nature is the outcome of His faithfulness, and has an ethical, not a logical basis; while the spiritual energies of men and of God have still their field of operation in the general scheme of nature. The independence of nature is a mere imagination; the whole system rests not for its origin only but for its persistence upon the "good pleasure" of the Infinite Personality at the back of all. It is evident, moreover, from the investigation of the sensible system, that it is intended only to be temporary. It had a beginning, it will have a definite dissolution, should the present laws of nature, as now understood, persist. "Perpetual motion" is an impossible dream. Does this not indicate, as clearly as outward revelation can, that the great Personality had no idea in the present system of creating a permanent and

* Cf. "Die Freiheit des Menschlichen Willens und die Einheit der Naturgesetze," von J. C. Fischer, iv., § 5. "Materialität des Gedankens," ss. 83-89.

independent one? We have no objection in the world to the discovery of law operating down to the minutest details of organic and inorganic existence. We accept of all the laws known now or which shall ever be discovered as the expressions of the wisdom of Him who can regulate on fixed principles a temporary system like the present, and prepare for a permanent system within the circle of His laws. But we should be blind as bats, did we not recognize "the law of liberty" shining clear as a star within the hierarchy of laws which God ordained, and over which He continues to preside.

CHAPTER V.

“THE LAW OF LIBERTY.”

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§ 1. **W**E have just seen that the "Reign of Law" is not a new tyranny recently discovered; that all which this abstraction stands for has been in existence from the first; and that it need frighten nobody when rightly regarded as the expression of the will of an infinitely wise and personal God. Nay, so far from being a tyranny, we shall find it the charter of creaturely freedom, and if the system is fairly analysed we shall find in it, to borrow the language of one of the sacred writers, a "law of liberty." As a set-off to the insinuation that because of the reign of law the universe is practically in bondage, it is absolutely necessary to assert that under the reign of law the universe is practically in the enjoyment of freedom.

§ 2. Now, our contention is that for every created thing there is a law of liberty. This law of liberty is the law of "its kind"; just as, in that psalm of evolution with which Genesis opens, plants and animals are represented as reproducing according to their kind, they do so in the exercise of the law of liberty. The inorganic kingdom illustrates this truth just as well as the organic. Why does one gas, for example, behave differently from another? We cannot as yet tell.* But we are safe in asserting that it is by virtue

* Cf. Jevons's "Principles of Science," p. 753.

of its "law of liberty." In fact, the inorganic kingdom proclaims aloud the fact of creaturely freedom. The behaviour of different substances is in virtue of a law of liberty with which in this "reign of law" they are endowed. And by this "law of liberty," let it be observed, we do not mean any region of the as yet inexplicable, which may be redeemed from mystery by the progress of discovery. We mean that after we have gone down to the roots of law and discovered the formula expressive of each substance's nature, we have simply displayed what is to that substance a "law of liberty."

§ 3. We suffer, as we have already shown, a good deal from false analogies. The present is a case in point. The idea prevails that freedom is *outlawry*, that within the bounds of law necessity, and not liberty, exists. Whereas the whole experience of mankind, when fairly analysed, goes to show that law and liberty are not antithetical, but synthetical. What we have already pointed out goes to show that in the dead inorganic kingdom below us, where, if we believed the alarmists, nothing but the tyranny of law obtains, there is enjoyed by each substance a law of liberty by virtue of which it asserts itself distinctively among its fellows, and realises no grinding tyranny at all.

§ 4. When now we advance from inorganic to organic substances, we find still more remarkable illustrations of this "law of liberty." If crystallization illustrates the law, much more will reproduction and growth in the organic kingdom. What is the tendency to variation upon which in the Darwinian theory so much is made to depend but an illustration of the "law of liberty"? Within the strict "reign of law" organic substances adhere to or depart from certain types, and give us the glorious "diversity in unity" which characterizes the whole organic kingdom in the enjoy-

ment of a "law of liberty." The vegetable kingdom teems with illustrations of the law of liberty. It is a mere imagination to say that the plant world enjoys no freedom; that a tyrannical "reign of law" has placed it all in chains. The plants take their own sweet way,—and we had almost said "will,"—not in spite, but in virtue, of the "reign of law," embracing, as it does, for each a "law of liberty."

§ 5. As we ascend in the scale of existence we find the law of liberty still enjoyed. Animals are *free*, by virtue of the laws of Nature. Each species finds in the law of its existence a law of liberty. No oppression is felt under the reign of law. Doubtless there is the "struggle for existence," a certain battle for life, but this very struggle is the collision of liberties. As for the automatism which Descartes and his followers attribute to the animals, it is a mere analogical *guess*, which self-consciousness in ourselves renders most improbable, and which, when insinuated regarding man, is an unphilosophical method of interpreting the known by the unknown. All we can know about the animals is, as we have already shown, from their analogy to ourselves; and being consciously free, we reject as illogical the notion, circulated with whatever purpose, that the animals are mere puppets, the sport of a mechanician, and therefore the legitimate sport of those made in His image.

§ 6. It is also to be noticed that animals through domestication and training may reach a state of perfection impossible if left to themselves. That is to say, the "reign of law" is such as, if applied intelligently, may lead the animals onwards to greater powers and a wider liberty. The animals themselves have manifestly insufficient mind to avail themselves of the advantages of many of nature's laws; but man interprets these for the animals, and by administering a certain training, he finds that the perfection

of the animals is promoted. It is surely to be noted that civilisation represents a promotion of the lower animals as well as of man. And all this animal progress through domestication is realised within the rigours of the "reign of law." The array of facts, consequently, which such a man as Darwin furnishes about domestication and training, is really a vast testimony to the possibility of *enlarged liberty* for animals in perfect consistency with the "reign of law." We may have occasion to refer to this subject further on in another relation.*

* The following quotation from Dr. Godet's "Conférences Apologétiques," No III., "Les Miracles de Jésus Christ," will serve to put the truth we try to state in the text in a clearer light. He says: "We must first notice in nature, alongside of a system of fixed laws, an element of freedom. The very existence of matter reposes upon a free act, at all events in the eyes of every one who has not broken with this fundamental article of our faith, this first word of Holy Scripture: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' It is true that after having accomplished this creative act, God seems to have abdicated His sovereignty over nature: this great whole, like a well-constructed clock, proceeds peaceably along the course which is prescribed to it. But even supposing that the orderly state of things which we see before us had always existed, and that Geology did not prove to us the mighty transformations by which it has been established, nature does not the less betray a tendency, even in her present state of repose, to emancipate herself from physical law, and to raise herself gradually into the sphere of liberty. In the inferior domains there reigns in sovereign power the law of gravitation, whose universal influence (*toute-puissance*) shows itself even to our eyes in the spherical form of bodies. The singular phenomena of crystallization exhibit even in metals a tendency to set themselves free from this law. By the variety and multiplicity of the operations which constitute vegetable life, plants raise themselves into a mode of existence very much freer and more incalculable still. In animals, with their free movements, regulated by their own will, the first dawn-streaks greet us of the reign of liberty. The real sovereignty of will over nature makes its appearance at last in man. Still subject in

§ 7. This brings us to the exercise of the law of liberty by man himself. Now our contention is that even if man did no more from day to day than obey instinctively the laws of his nature, he would find therein a law of liberty. In other words, even suppose we granted his *automatism*, it would be no conscious bondage to him, but a law of liberty. He would be asserting himself in the realm of nature with an individuality all his own. But we deny our automatism on the ground of self-consciousness. We are conscious of our freedom, and no physiological investigations can, or ought to, rob us of the precious assurance. The will asserts its rights and powers within our personality, and we feel sure that we are free. Even when we follow our lusts and inclinations, there is an exercise of will just as really as when we listen to the voice of duty.* And this will-power enables us to reject the rational and choose the irrational, if we are so inclined; to reject the right and deliberately choose the wrong; in a word, to take our own way even in spite of wisest warning and most significant experience.†

many respects to physical law, man is none the less able to act independently of it, and even, in very many cases, he is able to overcome and defy it. In each act of free obedience or of self-dedication, do we not behold man treading under his feet the law of physical instincts in the name and in the service of a superior law, that of moral obligation, of duty, the law which Scripture calls by the beautiful name 'the law of liberty,' because it is of its essence that it can only be truly obeyed by the deliberate and voluntary acquiescence of him who submits himself to it? From mere matter, then, up to men, we observe in nature an ever-ascending tendency towards freedom; it is, as it were, a return, step by step, to that principle of intelligent will to which nature owes its existence originally. Matter tends to spirit, because it is the creation of spirit" (pp. 18-20).

* Cf. Drossbach, "Ueber den Ausgangspunkt und die Grundlage der Philosophie," s. 87.

† Cf. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," p. 354.

Nay, more, this will-power is a true cause, standing outside and above the realm of necessary law, and endowing, as it has been most justly said, either side of a possibility with existence according to its sovereign pleasure.* It is not compelled to follow the strongest motive; it may take some weaker motive and endow it with such temporary importance as to act upon it alone; and this, surely, is unfettered liberty.†

§ 8. Of course such a position is assailed by materialists and thinkers who have become, in some respects, their prey. It is called the "popular" view, as if, in a matter where self-consciousness is the one infallible witness, the people generally may not be right and certain philosophers be wrong. It is asserted that the exercise of will is only the release of a certain amount of physical force, which in some mysterious manner assumes the will-form. But all these efforts to cheat us on physiological grounds out of the assurances of self-consciousness are futile. We hold to the consciousness of our freedom, and the more we consider it, the more we are impressed with its importance and its power. Even Professor Huxley is compelled grudgingly to admit that "our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events."‡ Before proceeding to show how human freedom has been a factor in history, it may be well to notice a significant assault made upon the freedom of the will by a writer already quoted. Mr. Graham, in his "Creed of Science," thus argues against it: "If there were this mysterious self lodged at the bottom of our being, endowed with the power of free volition, whether it issues its mandates from out the indescribable sphere of the noumenal

* Cf. Martineau's "Essays," vol. i., p. 126.

† Cf. Drossbach, *ut supra*, s. 91.

‡ "Lay Sermons," p. 159.

world, as Kant maintains, or whether it lives and governs amongst the circle of phenomenal motives in our ordinary phenomenal world, as other metaphysicians hold, in either case a consequence very serious for science would result. The self, or ego, would be a first cause ; its exercise of free-will would be a miracle, and something extremely like the miracle of creation *ex nihilo*. It would be the production and exercise of a force or energy underived from any prior energy or from other source than itself, which, so far as we can attempt to conceive an inconceivable and impossible thing would be the mysterious and inexplicable process of creation from nothing. . . . If we grant free-will, we must be prepared for further consequences. We shall have once more the return of the miracle, everywhere else expelled from the field of science and history ; and this time all the more dangerous if the power of working it be lodged within the man's breast to be daily exercised. Let us but once grant this mysterious self endowed with this power of free volition, and the miracle becomes everywhere else credible, as required by theological or metaphysical needs. For what is a miracle but the interruption of the regularity of natural sequence by the sudden irruption and interference of a foreign and superior power ? And what is the exercise of a free will but the like arbitrary appearance and interference of a foreign power in the circle of natural phenomenal motives for the purpose of breaking the natural sequence of motive and volition ? It is not the appearance of a new motive, but of a power different in kind, a thing *per se*, of whose existence, moreover, we have no evidence. Indeed, if we admit this miracle to be performed within ourselves and by ourselves, we are only obstinate as well as illogical in affirming its impossibility in other cases where it seems more urgently called for. But science cannot without self-

destruction allow either the miracle in general or the special one of creation *ex nihilo*; and least of all can she allow that both take place within the theatre of man's breast in the production of something from nothing, as in the supposed exercise of a free uncaused will. Science explains the facts and phenomena of nature from second causes, which are invariably, as Mill tells us, phenomenal causes. To do so is the business of science. She is not concerned either with ontologic or with first causes; but the existence of a free will, or ego, is either an ontologic cause, with which science is not concerned, or it is a phenomenal one for whose existence she finds no evidence, while it would contradict her two highest generalizations—the law of universal causation, and the law of the conservation of energy. The doctrine of a free will would enthrone man himself as deity, would make the ego a true creator—a result consistent possibly with most forms of German transcendental philosophy, but not with the conclusions of psychology and of modern science generally.”*

§ 9. This quotation is significant. Free-will, it appears, must be denied, because forsooth it would afford an *analogue* for creation and for miracle! It is not often that the *odium anti-theologicum* manifests itself so purely. We have already seen that “conservation of energy” and “the reign of law” can present no real obstacle to the free action of the creatures; and it is really too much to ask us to surrender the assurances of self-consciousness that physical science may be enthroned, and miracle proclaimed impossible. If this is the present tendency of the scientific spirit, then it must be denounced and resisted as the foe of truth and freedom.† We abide by the testimony of self-

* “Creed of Science,” pp. 134-6.

† Appendix. Note D.

consciousness ; we recognize the freedom of the will ; and we shall let the consequences take care of themselves.

§ 10. But as for the consequences of man's free-will, let us observe here, in the first place, that it is an undoubted fact that man has *suffered* through his self-will. The world is not what it might have been, in consequence of man's free-will. Scientific men will at least allow that man has been *sinning* against the laws of nature for many millenniums. They were, for the most part, sins of ignorance ; but their consequences have been "mourning, and lamentation, and woe." And the one remedy is, they will tell us, scientific acquaintance with the laws of nature. In other words, man has got to bring his will round to obedience to nature's laws. His free-will, leading him into outlawry, has resulted in pain and privation of many kinds, and wisdom directs him to obedience as his present redemption. His free acceptance of the light of nature conducts him to comfort and success. He finds, therefore, that law enlarges his liberty and his enjoyments if he freely obeys it. Hence the free man enters the domain of law, and by obedience he enlarges his dominion. So that law becomes not his condemnation as a slave, but his charter as a free man.

§ 11. What is civilization but the history of man enlarging his powers and his liberty by obedience to law ? He brings himself by a free act round to nature's way of thinking, so to speak, and finds himself conducted to an empire beyond the bounds of all his anticipations. It is law which enlarges liberty. Of course there has been a rushing into extremes. Man has gone in for "unlimited liberty," as in the times of the French Revolution, and demonstrated that "there is nothing in the idea of mere liberty to create the feeling of reverence ; the desire of

unlimited liberty is an essentially selfish feeling, and has no regard for any Power from above that might impose silence on each windy self-proclaimer."* But sooner or later it is seen that only by accepting of "liberty within the bounds of law" can its privileges be enjoyed.

§ 12. If the laws of nature, then, constitute the charter of man's liberty in the physical world, it will be found still farther that there is another law which is his charter of liberty in the moral world. It is expressed by one word, and that is LOVE. The Bible, as we understand it, has this purpose in view, to inculcate love—love to God and love to man. Hence it is called "the perfect law of liberty," indicating that the other laws already noticed do not embrace man's whole being as the law of love does. Now it is when we bring ourselves under this supreme law that we enter upon the highest freedom.† As Professor Bowne has put it: "The highest form of human freedom is not to be found in our subordinate acts whereby we change or resist external nature, and least of all is it to be found in acting against reason and right. The highest act of the free soul is the acceptance of our true nature, or the choice of right reason to be the law of our entire being."‡ This is the acceptance of the law of love as expounded for us in God's Word.§ "Bacon observed that it is by obeying the laws of nature that we become masters of nature. Every step in civilization reveals some new law claiming our submission, and by submitting to which we enlarge our empire. Every act is in the first instance a yoke that we take upon

* Blackie's "Natural History of Atheism," p. 52.

† Cf. "La Philosophie de la Liberte," par Charles Secretan, tome i., p. 489, etc.

‡ "Studies in Theism," p. 354.

§ Cf. Vatke's "Die Menschliche Freiheit," ss. 194—206.

ourselves, a discipline of our docility, which becomes the secret of future power. In the social state, submission to order and authority is submission to justice; and this limitation of brute emotions and rude instincts makes the power and the real freedom of the civilized man greater than that of the savage. In every sphere, man, a king by birthright, strives to reign; and he succeeds so far as he humbles himself to accept the subordinate and delegated royalty which has been traced out for him; but the process is then only adequate and complete in principle when it is applied to the very central spring of life, when the sinner at the feet of Jesus desires to have no will but His, and then rises up his own master and heir of all things. Royally minded, royally clad, royally guarded, royally victorious, he shall one day be royally lodged, and shall receive a crown, though he will not allow it to rest upon his own brow." *

§ 13. Man's power is recognised in the manipulation of the laws of nature by those who deny his free-will. They think that because free-will does not devote itself to impossibilities, and become a conjuror, and work wonders to the confusion of all science, therefore it cannot be said to exist.† But this is clearly a confusion of thought. Man has carried his self-will far enough in all conscience, as the sorrowful history of humanity attests. But wisdom comes, and he sees the propriety of keeping his free-will within due bounds; he concerns himself with the possible; he studies his environment, gets acquainted with nature's laws, and within "the reign of law" realises his liberty.

* Monsell's "Religion of Redemption," pp. 294—5.

† Cf. Fischer's "Die Freiheit des Menschlichen Willens," ss. 144-167; Graham's "Creed of Science," p. 233.

His wisdom is seen in exercising his freedom within definite bounds.

§ 14. A law of liberty has, consequently, been granted by the great Ruler of all to all His creatures. It is a mere projection of an abstract idea into a domain where it has no legitimate place to suppose that law tyrannises over them. They are free under the so-called reign of law. Moreover, in the case of man, not only is he free like the rest of the animated creation, but he is also endowed with a will-power which asserts itself amid the reign of law, either to secure misfortune or to facilitate progress. But this endowment of freedom becomes a blessing to us only when we conform ourselves to law, the laws of nature, and, above and beyond these, the law of love. In love man is free as air—then, and only then, has he entered into perfect liberty. It has been absolutely needful to assert this fact of liberty under law, since the whole question with which we have to deal has suffered from the confusion introduced by the abstraction “reign of law.” If we are not watchful, we shall be led to regard ourselves as mental slaves, because our minds manifest themselves according to certain “laws of thought.” It is easy confusing a question; it must be our aim to emancipate ourselves from the confusion by realizing that in the midst of these laws ordained of God we are not only free, but, by wise manipulation of them, enlarging our liberty every day.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAW OF PRAYER.

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§ 1. WE have now reached that stage in our discussion when we can, without prejudice to our consciousness of freedom under the reign of law, look around us and discern in the very constitution of nature a law of PRAYER. Nature might have been constructed on a prayerless principle; as a matter of fact, it has been constructed on the prayerful principle. Without prayer, nature as at present constituted would go to pieces. This is what we proceed to point out in the present chapter.

§ 2. But first let us start with a clear conception of what prayer is. It may be defined as *the expression of a sense of want, whether on one's own behalf or on behalf of others, in hope of that want being supplied*. It may not take an articulate form at all. Animals, for instance, utter their cries, and response comes to these cries, and all in the order of nature. Take the cry of young animals for food; that cry is the expression of want, that cry is heard by the parent bird or beast as the case may be, it is responded to, the cry has been answered; in the very order of nature *prayer has proved efficacious*. Animated nature is thus seen to be constructed upon the prayer plan. Animals express their wants in cries, and provision is made in some way for an answer to these cries. It is not necessary to suppose

that they are *conscious* of their prayerfulness. All they are conscious of is their *want*, but as we contemplate their instinctive appeals for succour we recognise them as prayers addressed for help to some power that can save. Hence we find the Hebrew poet interpreting nature truly when he represents the young lions as roaring after their prey and seeking their meat from God (Psalm civ. 21). He did not intend to convey the notion that there is any conscious appeal upon the young lions' part to the Most High, but he recognizes in their roar a real prayer, which receives in the order of nature its answer. And it may be well to add here that the prayer of the beasts of prey, though answered often, is not infallibly efficacious. David says in the thirty-fourth psalm: "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" (v. 10). The idea manifestly is that the Lord may disappoint the young lions as they roar for prey, but He will not disappoint His own people.

The animal world, therefore, is full of PRAYER. In fact, the relations of the sexes, of the young to their parents, of animals generally to their food, include appeals to one another and answers to those appeals; in a word, efficacious prayer is seen to be a law of nature in the relations of the beasts.*

§ 3. But farther, we see a great field of prayer in the relations of the animals to man. Bacon speaks somewhere about man being "the god of the dog." But we may extend the notion to all the animals man has domesticated. The universal statement of the Apostle James is nearly realized: "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been

* Cf. Professor Wallace's admirable lecture, "Prayer in Relation to Natural Law," to which we are much indebted.

tamed of mankind" (iii. 7). And in this dominion which man has obtained over the lower animals there is a marvellous field for prayer. In how many forms do the poor creatures appeal to us? They appeal in their hunger for food; in their thirst for drink; in their pain for relief; in their loneliness for sympathy and society. And the good-hearted answer their appeals; we bring them food; we carry them water, or lead them to the river's brink; we do our best to heal their wounds or their diseases; and we give them such sympathy and such society as our engagements allow;—in a word, we answer their prayers, and make them efficacious, all in perfect consistency with the order of nature.*

§ 4. And here it may be well to point out the character of the procedure. We have already seen that our knowledge of the beasts is from their analogy to ourselves. But they have not the faculty of speech which we possess. Their appeals are the appeals of the dumb, a system of signs, which our intelligence enables us to interpret. We guess at their meaning, we test our guess by our answer, and we have the great satisfaction often of seeing our guess *verified*, and the animal relieved. We are able by our intellectual

* The following quotation from Principal Dawson will confirm the view given in the text. He says: "A naturalist should be the last man in the world to object to the efficacy of prayer, since prayer is itself one of the most potent of natural forces. The cry of the young raven brings its food from afar, without any exertion on its part, for that cry has power to move the emotions and the muscles of the parent-bird, and to overcome her own selfish appetite. The bleat of the lamb not only brings its dam to its side, but causes the secretion of milk in her udder. The cry of distress nerves men to all exertions, and to brave all dangers, and so struggle against all or any of the laws of nature that may be causing suffering or death. Nor in the case of prayer are the objects obtained at all mechanically commensurate with the activities set in

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powers to interpret the appeal of creatures below us in the scale of existence, and to answer them. And on the other hand, we are enabled to *reveal* to them our will or our desires, as the case may be, and to secure or compel their submission. So that in the order of nature we find ourselves enabled to hear and answer prayers from below us, and to publish our commands and our will in the inferior realm, so as to secure a very large measure of obedience. We wish to point out the marvellous interest which this has when looked at analogically. It carries not only the philosophy of prayer within its breast, but also the analogue of *revelation*.

§ 5. But now we must rise in the scale of existence to contemplate *prayer as it exists among men*. Let us begin at the beginning, and consider the cry of hungry children for bread. It was here Jesus began in His *analogical argument* about prayer. "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. . . . If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye

motion. We have all seen how the prayer of a few captives, wrongfully held in durance by some barbarous potentate, may move mighty nations and cause them to pour out millions of their treasure, to send men and materials of war over land and sea, to sacrifice hundreds of lives, in order that a just and proper prayer may be answered. In such a case we see how the higher law overrides the lower, and may cause even frightful suffering and loss of life, in order that a mere spiritual end may be gained. Are we to suppose, then, that the only Being in the universe who cannot answer prayer is that One who alone has all power at His command? The weak theology which professes to believe that prayer has merely a subjective benefit is infinitely less scientific than the action of the child who confidently appeals to a Father in heaven."

then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke xi. 9-13.)

In Matthew the last verse is given in a more general form :

"How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. vii. 11.) It is

surely significant that Jesus Christ, whose appreciation of nature was profound, should thus give us an analogical argument in favour of prayer to the unseen Father from the prayers of hungry children to their human parents. The children, just like the young of the lower animals, cry when hungry to their parents for bread; the parents hear their cry, and, if worthy of the name, they do their best to give them the good things they need; as a rule, even though times are hard, the parents "know how to give" the good things to their little ones. The reign of law may exist and the struggle for existence be severe, but the parents can so insert themselves into the order of nature as to get for their little ones what they need. The prayer of the famishing children proves efficacious.

§ 6. Let us pass upwards for further illustration. A child or grown person is sick. The suffering, we shall suppose, is severe. The patient cannot diagnose his own case. He can tell something of his symptoms; he can point to the seat of pain, and give an idea to others of what is wrong; but he does not know his disease, he has not the knowledge to discern its character. A doctor comes, and an appeal is made to the doctor for relief. Perhaps the appeal is inarticulate—it may be but a groan, or a tear, or a sigh; but it is a sufficient *prayer*, and the doctor does his best to relieve the sufferer. The attention given by the doctor to the case is, so far, an answer to the patient's prayer. Thus far has the prayer been efficacious. But now, in the order

of nature, *another prayer* comes in. The doctor does not profess to do cures by any inherent personal power; he uses means, and these means are *appeals to a curative power in nature*. There can be no doubt of the existence of a *vis medicatrix naturæ*, and, whether the doctor always realizes the meaning of his act or no, he does really adopt a "scientific method of appeal," as it has been called, which in relation to our present inquiry is a *prayer* for the cure of his patient. And in multitudes of cases the appeal of the physician to nature's healing power is efficacious; the cure comes, the pain departs, the doctor's prayer and the patient's previous prayer have been efficacious.*

§ 7. But we must rise higher still. From the groans and tears of the sick we shall now pass to the social courtesies of the strong and healthy, and here do we find another vast field for efficacious prayer. What is an act of courtesy? Is it not a prayer addressed to a companion, and eliciting a fitting response? Suppose for a moment that these prayers addressed to one another with their corresponding answers were suspended, that instead of asking for and receiving favours we eventually resolved to resort to force, then the age of barbarism would at once return upon us, in which, as Wordsworth so daintily puts it in his poem on *Rob Roy's Grave*,

"The good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

It is thus evident that *but for prayer as a law of society*, it would go to pieces altogether. The constitution of nature

* Cf. "Henry Holbeach: Student in Life and in Philosophy," vol. i., p. 205-6.

is thus seen to include as an all-important element the exercise of efficacious prayer.

§ 8. Let us pursue the subject. Take man’s intellectual nature. It needs food just as well as his body does. How does it get it?—By prayer and its answer. What are intellectual *inquiries* but prayers addressed to wiser men, or, as we may say, to the still wiser nature, at whose feet science is proud to sit? What are *experiments* but prayers presented, so to speak, at nature’s shrine, and receiving definite answers? What are the appliances of scientific or literary men but appeals for help to those quarters whence they believe help can come? The intellectual realm is crammed full of efficacious prayer just as we have found the animal realm to be. And those truths which come flashing like *inspiration*, the very word Professor Tyndall uses regarding them, from the infinite spaces, revealing new lines of light and truth to the mind which is fitted to take them in,—what are these, we ask, but answers to inquiring minds given in the order of nature? The truth is that prayer, real and efficacious, is the rule, and not the exception, in all nature’s kingdoms.

§ 9. And in truth an eye of genius, no matter how opposed to the conclusion which we hope in this discussion logically to reach, can hardly escape the appeals made in nature, and answered according to her laws. Thus the author of “Natural Religion” has recently pointed out something like a “propitiation” in nature. “Science,” he says, “also has its ‘procuratio prodigiorum.’ It does not believe that nature is benevolent; and yet it has all the confidence of Mohammedans or Crusaders. This is because it believes that it understands the laws of nature, and that it knows how to deal so that nature shall favour its operations. Not by the Sibylline books, but by experiment;

not by supplications, but by scientific precautions and operations, it discovers and propitiates the mind of its deity."* It thus appears that the world of mind as well as the world of organised matter is constructed upon the prayer principle. The want of the individual, whether physical or mental, is expressed in some form or another; and so in the order of nature the answer comes. Prayer has proved efficacious.

§ 10. We have hitherto spoken only of personal wants and personal petitions. We have now to turn to the other aspect of prayer, where it is truly disinterested—we mean *intercessory prayer*; and here again our analogies crowd in upon us. Among the lower animals we may find intercessory prayer in exercise. Have not parent birds and beasts been observed seeking and imploring food not for themselves, but to give to their young? There is a whole world of disinterestedness revealed just here in the parental relations of the lower animals. But we had better proceed at once to the illustrations among men, and we cannot do better than take the illustration our Lord affords us. "Which of you," said He, "shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke xi. 5-8). Here, then, is a case of intercessory prayer as it obtains among men. This kindly, hospitable man, who goes out into the darkness to beg, is not

hungry himself; he has had his supper; but the visit of the hungry guest has come upon him with surprise. It is for another he pleads, and this is what makes his importunity so efficacious. The friend within recognizes that it is not for himself but for another he seeks the favour, and so surrenders it. Now the social and public life of men is full of such cases of intercessory prayer. What are testimonials, letters of introduction, personal influence, but cases of intercessory prayer followed often by success, and so far efficacious; and all, let us remember, according to the order of nature.

§ 11. It thus appears that the system of nature when fairly analysed includes prayer. We have prayer *inarticulate*, the cry of beasts and birds, the cry of infants, the tears and groans of the sick and the afflicted, the doctor's medicine, the scientific man's experiments—these are all prayers of the inarticulate sort appealing for physical or mental help, and as a rule receiving what is sought. We have prayer *articulate*—the petitions of children, the petitions of courtesy, the petitions of public life; and answers more or less satisfactory are forthcoming according to the order of nature. Lastly, we have intercessory prayers among animals and among men, disinterestedness pure and simple entering into the field and achieving success. We are warranted, therefore, in saying that *efficacious prayer is a law of nature*. We have admitted that, like other laws, it may be limited by circumstances so as to have proper exceptions. If every cry were heard and answered without question, there would be no room for wisdom and judgment in the world. Human judgment may wisely decide to refuse some petitions, as being baneful to the petitioners. Is every sot to get the drink he calls for? Is a child to get the light or the loaded firearm he would like

to play with? Is the dog to be overfed because he cries for more than we know will be good for him?—Assuredly not. Nature assigns limits to the efficacy of prayer. But they are mainly in the physical domain. In the intellectual, the moral, and, as we shall presently see, in the spiritual, the limitations are practically so distant that we may enjoy without apprehension an unending development. The answers to our inquiries in matters intellectual, moral, and spiritual are not so niggardly as some suppose, but are given to us with royal hand. Meanwhile we must close the present chapter with reiterating its leading idea that we have found efficacious prayer to be a law of nature.

PART III.

Efficacious Prayer a Privilege of the Kingdom
of Grace.

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CHAPTER VII.

*GOD TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED
AS FREE.*

CHAPTER VII.

GOD TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED AS FREE.

§ I. **W**E have in the preceding part of this work considered the facts of the order of nature as we find them. We have seen the abstraction, "reign of law," yielding so far to analysis as to be regarded as not incompatible with liberty. We have further found on appeal to self-consciousness that we are ourselves free. And in our freedom we have found a great field for efficacious prayer without rising to the invisible realm at all. Not only so, but this region of prayer and answer as between the creatures brings us face to face with a most important fact—viz., that in the constitution of nature there is a field for GRACE. Let us revert for a moment to some of our facts adduced in last chapter. We pass over the facts about prayer among the lower animals that we may attach the idea of grace more emphatically to human relations. Take the relations of children to parents. Have we not here a great exhibition of *grace*, or undeserved favour? Is there a child able to think correctly who must not admit that to such constant care as a mother or even a father extends, he has no *just* claim? Do we not cheerfully acknowledge that we can never repay our parents for their *gracious* care, and is not the idea in our own parental relations, when they come to us, that by the gracious care of our own children we may in some measure repay our obligation to the preceding

generation? The whole "binding of the generations each to each" is through a relation of *grace*.

§ 2. Take again the courtesies of society; what do we exactly mean by affirming that persons carry themselves with "grace" and are in their bearing "most gracious"? Manifestly we mean that they show consideration for others to which these recipients have no real title; in a word, the gracious treat with *favour* those with whom they come in contact. Again, the field of testimonials, letters of introduction, influence, and such like, is one vast field allotted in the order of nature to the exercise of *grace*. Nay, more; those revelations which come to scientific investigators regarding new laws and ampler generalisations are, when strictly considered, manifestations of *grace* to the recipients. No properly constituted mind, we imagine, will assert that the preliminary investigations constitute a fair *price* for the discovery. Rather will it be acknowledged that the grand discovery is beyond all personal desert. Hence we come to the conclusion that there is a "kingdom of grace" set up within the order of nature, and that, as a rule, we are not treated as we morally deserve.

§ 3. Starting, then, from this ground of fact, we proceed to the inquiry regarding the existence and nature of God. From what we have already urged in Chapter III., we are compelled to posit a supreme Intelligence at the back of things, the same in kind with ourselves, but inconceivably greater in degree. And now we proceed to inquire what His relation is to the order of nature and the reign of law. We have found *ourselves free* within the realm of natural law, and we have no alternative, according to the analogy to which we are committed, but to posit a kindred freedom as belonging to God. But when we extend this idea of freedom, as we require to extend it, we find our conceptions of

God greatly enlarged and improved. As for the "reign of law" in its relation to God, it is plain that it can be no external tyranny imposed upon Him. So far from being so, it is simply the mode of His own manifestation, and its persistence rests, as already noticed, simply upon His own faithfulness. There can be no antagonism between the laws and their Author. A quotation from Professor Bowne will put this point before us clearly. "It is sometimes urged that God cannot be free, because with infinite wisdom and goodness there can be but one outcome; but this objection strangely fancies that freedom consists in doing the unrighteous and irrational, instead of in freely accepting and realizing what rational and ethical principles demand. Schleiermacher defined moral action to be the imposing of reason upon nature; we regard it rather as the imposing of reason upon one's self. But what is thus a fact with man must be allowed as possible with God. We view the Divine righteousness, therefore, as no constitutional necessity, but as the ceaseless ratification, by the Divine will, of those rational and ethical principles which are founded in the Divine nature. The Divine nature expresses what God essentially is. The Divine character expresses what God chooses to be."* In perfect consistency, therefore, with this clearly expressed truth, we maintain that the course of nature is no bondage imposed upon God, but simply the expression of His own will, and so far the outcome of His freedom.

§ 4. Besides, we are bound to notice the free use *we* are enabled to make of nature's laws. Although our knowledge of the laws of nature is small at best, and an increasing sense of what remains to be known is daily forced upon investigators, yet wonders have already been accomplished

* "Studies in Theism," pp. 354-5.

through man's knowledge of these laws. The arts and sciences have changed the face of the world ; they have done magician's work, so to speak, among us. If man, then, we argue, with his little insight has done so much, what may we not expect from God with perfect knowledge and perfect command of the laws of nature ? "When we ascribe the attribute of intelligence to the first cause," says Mr. Romanes, "we of necessity imply that the quality is similar in kind to our own—otherwise our ascription can possess no meaning. If, then, our finite intelligence, objectively considered, is pre-eminently characterized by its combining influence over natural law, much more must the infinite intelligence be so characterized. If the mind of man is able, through the agency of mindless law, to produce such vast and varied effects, how inconceivably great and diverse must be the possible effects similarly producible by the mind of God, supposing this to operate. . . . Human intelligence, then, in its influence over law, is limited in two directions—by a deficiency in knowledge, and by a deficiency in power. In neither of these directions can we suppose any limitation to obtain in the supreme intelligence. Consequently, it becomes impossible for human intelligence to predicate the number and kinds of the special results which it is possible for the final directive influence to produce, through the purposive combination of natural law. . . . If the human mind can do so much as it does in the way of directing the natural forces, how inconceivably immense must be the ability of the final directive intelligence, transcending as it does so immeasurably its mere human analogue, and depending as all things do upon its prime directive influence."*

* "Christian Prayer and General Laws," by G. J. Romanes, M.A., pp. 163-8.

§ 5. It is plain, therefore, that, supposing the laws of nature to have been all started on their career at the first, and never to have received a single reinforcement from the possibilities of the infinite nature of God, He could so command His battalions as to produce most varied and most marvellous results. If man, with his tiny grasp of the magnificent system, can yet make it serve a vast variety of purposes, it is surely childish to suppose that He, who has perfect knowledge and command of the whole, cannot make it subserve His purposes! A supreme and free intelligence cannot but have infinite possibilities in such a system as nature.

§ 6. When, therefore, from the analogy of human freedom, we rise to the recognition of God as free, and address Him as such, we are surely warranted in believing that He can do wonders for us, even supposing Him to restrict Himself to the system of law at present in operation. If men can surprise us with their inventions, which are really their combination and adaptation of the laws of nature, much more may we believe in the possibility of the all-wise and infinite Spirit working wonders for us in response to prayer. We are not now considering the substance of the prayer at all, but simply the *possibilities* which, in the midst of His own reign of law, lie open to the infinite Spirit. Even granting that the age of miracles is past, granting that the Most High now restricts Himself to the existing laws of nature as His instruments, then it is as certain as any analogy can make it that He has practically unlimited powers of responding to the supplications of His people.

§ 7. We should, however, understate the case if we paused here. The Divine freedom must be regarded as wider than the human in this respect, that it is not restricted to the order of nature for its *ideas*. It has, indeed, been

supposed that if the Most High did not exhaust His budget of ideas at the very start, He was exhibiting intellectual incapacity. This is practically the position taken up in the mechanical analogy presented in so interesting a fashion by Mr. Babbage, in his "Ninth Bridgewater Treatise." Because this thinker was able to *design* a calculating engine, although it was never actually made, which could turn out numbers according to one law for an immense number of times, and then suddenly change the law for one delivery, ever afterwards reverting to the previous law, so he argued analogically the Most High could have constructed the machine of the universe so as to turn out results according to a uniform plan, then suddenly change and give a few exceptions, and afterwards revert to its uniform practice, and all through *mechanical* prearrangement. In this way Mr. Babbage believed he could give mechanical analogues for the miracles of Revelation. That we are presenting his idea properly will appear from a quotation. He says: "To call into existence all the variety of vegetable forms, as they become fitted to exist, by the successive adaptations of their parent earth, is undoubtedly a high exertion of creative power. When a rich vegetation has covered the globe, to create animals adapted to that clothing, which, deriving nourishment from its luxuriance, shall gladden the face of nature, is not only a high but a benevolent exertion of creative power. To change, from time to time, after lengthened periods, the races which exist, as altered physical circumstances may render their abode more or less congenial to their habits, by allowing the natural extinction of some races, and by a new creation of others more fitted to supply the place previously abandoned, is still but the exercise of the same benevolent power. To cause an alteration in those physical circumstances—to add to the comforts of the

newly-created animals—all these acts imply power of the same order, a perpetual and benevolent superintendence, to take advantage of altered circumstances, for the purpose of producing additional happiness. But, to have *foreseen*, at the creation of matter and of mind, that a period would arrive when matter, assuming its prearranged combinations, would become susceptible of the support of vegetable forms; that these should in due time themselves supply the pabulum of animal existence; that successive races of giant forms or of microscopic beings should at appointed periods necessarily rise into existence, and as inevitably yield to decay; and that decay and death—the lot of each individual existence—should also act with equal power on the races which they constitute; that the extinction of every race should be as certain as the death of each individual; and the advent of new genera be as inevitable as the destruction of their predecessors;—to have foreseen all these changes, and to have provided, by one comprehensive law, for all that should ever occur, either to the races themselves, to the individuals of which they are composed, or to the globe which they inhabit, manifests a degree of power and of knowledge of a far higher order.”*

§ 8. Now we do not criticise Mr. Babbage's position for the purpose of throwing any discredit upon the idea of development, or of encouraging a return to the old view of separate creations. We simply desire to point out the fact that it is a *mechanical analogy* with which we are dealing, and the question arises of necessity, “Is this the highest idea we can entertain of God from the light of our own nature?” And it will be seen it is *not*, since it really implies that unless God exhausted His ideas at the start so as to be absolutely prevented from publishing a new one,

* Babbage's “Ninth Bridgewater Treatise,” pp. 44-6.

and endowed the universal machine with such self-regulating power as to save Himself from any further concern, He was not exhibiting the highest intellectual power. This is, in fact, the old idea of the mechanician in virtual superannuation over again, and is *not* the highest type of mind. What better, it will now be asked, do we propose? We simply propose to regard God as free, so that if His grace and benevolence demand it, He can show Himself "utterly exempt from bondage either to the fixed course of nature or to the past course of history. He is not obliged to keep within the groove of natural law, or to conform to ancient precedent. His power was not exhausted in the first creation, nor His invention in the means by which in former times He accomplished His ends. There is no limit to His power, no limit to His capacity for new ideas. 'He fainteth not, neither is weary, and there is no searching of His understanding.' Surely a most worthy conception of God, superior far to that cherished either by philosophic naturalism or by theological conservatism, one of which denies to God the power of doing absolutely new things, and the other, while ascribing to God miraculous power, virtually denies to Him the power of doing new things in new ways, and makes Him the slave of old modes of action, obliged to repeat Himself, and debarred by venerable custom from every form of activity that wears the aspect of innovation." *

§ 9. As this point is vital, we will give another quotation which will still farther make our conception of God clear, as the actively free Being whom the analogy of human nature suggests. Tucker, in his "Light of Nature Pursued," says: "An inactive Deity, doing nothing for many ages past besides contemplating the play of His works, seems repugnant to

* Dr. A. B. Bruce's "Chief End of Revelation," p. 180.

our idea of perfection, as that includes omnipotence and an absolute command over the creatures, which we cannot well apprehend without an actual operation upon them to govern and direct their motions ; for power never exerted does, to our thinking, scarce deserve the name of power. And though we cannot suppose otherwise than that God is completely happy in Himself, nor wants amusements to pass His time agreeably as we do, yet neither is it incongruous with our notions of Him, to Whom nothing is labour or trouble, that He should not have dispatched His work once for all to solace Himself ever after in quiet and repose, but should have reserved Himself something still to do wherein He might find continual employment for His Almighty power. Nor does this supposition derogate from His infinite wisdom, because it does not represent Him as making the world imperfect out of necessity, for want of skill or ability to frame one which should run on for ever without correcting, but by choice, because He so enlarged His plan as to take in, not only the motions of matter, and actions of sentient and intelligent creatures, but likewise His own immediate acts, which we may say were contained among the list of second causes—second not to any prior agent which might give them force or direction, but to the first determination of His will, and to the plan or order of succession He laid down from everlasting.” *

§ 10. Are we then to consider God as so free that He can interpose at any moment with some new power, and put all our science to confusion ? We are bound by the analogy to believe He can interpose at any moment He pleases ; but whether He will or no is a distinct question. The rise of science is an important factor in human progress—one which the infinite Spirit, we may be certain, does not

* “Light of Nature Pursued,” Daly’s Edition of 1836, vol. i., p. 526.

disregard. He will not put His creatures to intellectual confusion, and upon His faithfulness in nature He shows us we may rely ; but the uniformity of nature is a question of ethics, and not a question of physical necessity. Hence we are not put to confusion if asked on unimpeachable testimony to believe that God interposed in such fashion long ago for a gracious purpose, as to convince the honest-hearted witnesses that it was "the finger of God," while now we have no evidence of such interposition. Miracles, as interruptions, not contradictions, of the laws of nature, to enable man to break through the tyranny of the words "law" and "nature," are not only consistent with the Divine freedom, but eminently worthy of His grace.* But the free Spirit, on whose "good pleasure" we in the last analysis must depend, takes His own time for the miraculous interpositions, and their occurrence is a matter for testimony.

§ 11. When, therefore, we recognize God as free, and address Him as such, we contemplate Him simply as a Being of *infinite resource*. We believe He showed His freedom and His presence in miraculous answers to prayer in primitive times, just as we believe He shows His faithfulness in providing natural uniformity in scientific times. In both cases He has been appealing for our confidence, and man has not been put thereby to any intellectual confusion. We believe in God's ability within the reign of law to work wonders, just as we believe in His ability to show

* Cf. Robertson's "Human Race and Other Sermons," p. 128 ; also A. R. Wallace's "On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," where, in his defence of spiritualism, he makes free to say, "Few, if any, reputed miracles are at all worthy of a God" (p. 44). It is evident that the writer has given no such attention to the Biblical miracles of grace as he has to the deliverances of "mediums," and the reality, as he regards it, of "witchcraft."

Himself above law should the needs of His creatures demand a gracious and personal interposition. Such a view of Divine freedom endangers no science properly so called, but is a simple call for confidence in Him whom we are compelled to posit as at the back of all. It simply transfers to the ethical domain what some are tempted on insufficient grounds to relegate to the mechanical.*

* Appendix. Note E.

CHAPTER VIII.

*GOD TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED
AS SOCIAL.*

CHAPTER VIII.

GOD TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED AS SOCIAL.

§ 1. WE have seen that it is only reasonable to recognize and to address God as free. From the "law of liberty" which all creatures enjoy, we rise analogically to the Divine freedom, and address Him as a real sovereign amid the laws He has Himself ordained. But He might be free, and recognized as such, and yet might decline communion with us. It is needful consequently to inquire what other qualities we are bound to recognize in God from the analogy of our own nature, and which will assure our hearts before Him. We propose in this chapter to show that it is reasonable to regard Him as *social* as well as free.

§ 2. Once more we betake ourselves to the study of nature. Therein we recognize not only freedom, but also an element of sociality. The whole question of *sex* starts up for consideration here. Passing over a few inferior organizations which reproduce their kind *asexually*; passing over the exceptional and yet significant fact of *parthenogenesis*, we find nature at a very early period carrying on her functions through the instrumentality of two sexes, the male and the female, and pursuing this plan up through the development until we reach human nature. It is not needful for our argument that we should enter at any

length into the question of "the sexes throughout Nature. We may remark, however, that both Darwin and Spencer have, it is believed, treated the question with haste and unfairness. They have both exalted the male sex and depreciated the female sex, on what are believed to be insufficient grounds. They have made "natural selection" do duty in a quite unnecessary exaltation of the stronger sex. We mention this, not that we may digress into the question of *Women's Rights*, which is involved in the discussion, but that we may point out the ground of the grievance in this case. In a well-written volume published in America, the authoress asserts that the conclusions of Darwin and Spencer about the inequality of the sexes are due to their want of *womanly* experience. "However superior their powers," she says, "their opportunities, their established scientific positions, yet in this field of inquiry *pertaining to the normal powers and functions of woman*, it is they who are at a disadvantage. Whatever else women may not venture to study and explain with authority, on this topic they are more than the peers of the wisest men in Christendom. Experience must have more weight than any amount of outside observation. We are clearly entitled, on this subject, to a respectful hearing." * This accomplished lady goes on consequently to contend for the "equivalence of the sexes." Tracing the characteristics of the sexes up through the series of animals, she shows that there is a marked system of compensations, so that a general equivalence of the sexes may be recognized all through.

§ 3. But our argument simply requires that the meaning of the arrangement should be made out, and there can be

* "The Sexes throughout Nature," by Antoinette Brown Blackwell, pp. 6-7; cf. also p. 163.

little doubt that the authoress is right when she says that the *origin* of sex is *division of function* (p. 46). And it is interesting to trace the relation of the sexes, the relative size of parents, the way the males and females treat their offspring and treat each other, the absence or presence of parental love, and such like, in all which facts nature was working on, so to speak, to the higher relation between the sexes which human nature illustrates. One thing is certain, moreover, from the study of the sexes in nature, that they are intended to exhibit an element of *sociality*. All below us goes to illustrate the fact that beings are meant for companionship and not for loneliness.

§ 4. And when we take up human nature, we find that there are two distinct experiences reigning throughout it,—the experience of man, and the experience of woman. A man cannot appreciate a woman's experience further than she enables him to do by her testimony. It is solely as a matter of testimony, and therefore of revelation, that he knows what she is. She, on the other hand, knows him only so far as he reveals himself. But both feel assured that they are complements of each other, and that satisfaction can only be reached through association with each other. This satisfaction, it may be shown, will be in proportion as man realises in woman his intended *equal*. To quote again from Mrs. Blackwell: "How the few really great men of the world reach out to shake hands with each other, across an ocean or a continent, more rejoiced at a word from one of these, an equal, than with endless plaudits from millions of inferiors! *The appreciation and companionship of one's equals is everywhere the social element of highest value.* Add to this the responsive, quickening influences, which react with special enthusiasm between the sexes, and you have my highest ideal of the sustaining

and thoroughly ennobling effects which arise from human sympathy. But man, for ever bowing his royal head, craning his moral neck, and dropping his eyes from their heavenward outlook down to woman, is not an edifying social arrangement, nor can it be a pleasant means of grace to either party."*

§ 5. Man is a social being, therefore, and the sexes are the first emphatic testimony throughout all nature to the social element which obtains self-consciousness within us. How essential society is to even our *physical* well-being may be seen from our experience at meals. A single fact will illustrate this. "A lady once told me," says the authoress just quoted, "she found it extremely difficult to take her meals alone habitually, and yet continue in good health." Her explanation was this: "By herself she was at a loss how to graduate the amount of food which it was best to take. Appetite was often an uncertain guide. But if she could observe the amount taken by half-a-dozen others about her, she was able to strike a much more satisfactory average for herself."† But if our physical well-being demands society, much more will it be found that our intellectual and moral well-being demands it. When thought and action are fairly analysed, it will be found that they can exist only in relation to beings beyond ourselves. Absolute solitude would be the death of thinking as well as of moral power within us.

§ 6. Let us look first at our intellectual dependence. We find, as a matter of experience, that "there must be reception from some quarter before thought can begin; and then the function of thought is to work over the raw material."‡ Or to put it in the still more striking phrase-

* *Ibid.*, p. 180.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 224-5.

‡ Bowne's "Studies in Theism," p. 83.

ology of Fischer, "We are not the fathers, we are only the mothers of our thoughts."* Of course, as a materialist, he traces the fatherhood of thought to a purely physical source; but all we wish to emphasize is that thought becomes possible only through our *association* with something beyond us. Our "intellectual sociality" will appear still more plainly from the following quotation from the late Professor Grote: "That each one of us is a social being means a great deal more than that he is an individual of the genus man, living with other individuals of the same genus, talking with them, and pursuing common purposes with them. He is social to the bottom of his mind; and each one of his faculties is different from that which it would be if it was not part of his nature to associate himself. He *thinks* socially, and cannot think otherwise; and so far as, by a solitude inappropriate to his nature, he is thrown out of actual companionship, he is like a man deprived of his legs, or anything which *ought* to be his; there is feeling of want, painful effort, and more or less supply of what is wanted from some other source in the system."† Solitude, if absolute, is no strength to any human being; solitude is useful only as a help to communion with One higher and better than ourselves. Even when the mind refuses, as it may, to rise into the recognition of God, solitude is only serviceable when peopled by the thoughts of others,—coming through nature, or books, or memory. Intellectually, we cannot help being social.‡

§ 7. It may easily be shown again that we are *morally*

* "Die Freiheit des Menschlichen Willens," s. 10.

† Cf. Grote's "Treatise on the Moral Ideals," p. 62.

‡ Cf. Professor Wallace's "Human Nature a Witness to the Divine Trinity," in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for January 1883.

just as dependent as we are intellectually. Were we not in relation to other beings, our moral powers would fail for lack of exercise. To quote once more from Professor Grote : " We should be as badly off without a work to do as without a world to live in. And we may fairly consider, that when in virtue of our nature to which it bears a relation, we conceive our as yet unperformed but ideal work, there is as much reason, though it is of a different kind, for *this* conception, as there is for our conception, in virtue of the same nature, of the world in which we are."* It may also be shown that our action contracts moral value only so far as it contemplates the benefit of other beings. " We might, conceivably," says this author further on, " devote all our time and all our power to the promoting our own happiness and good ; in this point of view, whatever is not devoted to it (being applied to our neighbours' happiness) is so much taken from it ; *i.e.*, is self-sacrifice. But it is exactly *this* action,—the action which is, in a small or a great degree, a withdrawing of our power from effort after our own happiness to effort after doing ' what we should,'—which, as we have seen, has ' aretaic' value, or merit."† Morally, therefore, as well as intellectually, man is a social being. The element of sociality cannot be ignored.

§ 8. If, then, we are led by the analogy of our nature to attribute freedom to God, we are as clearly led to attribute *sociality* to Him. His social qualities regulate His free action. His delights will be found to be with the sons of men. We have already referred to the intelligibility of nature. It is a feast of reason, as scientific men before investigation believe, and which they verify through it. And as the investigation rises from the series of facts to the recognition of

* " Treatise on the Moral Ideals," pp. 48-9.

† *Ibid.*, p. 73.

law, he acknowledges an experience coming from beyond himself and a real inspiration. "It is," says Professor Tyndall in his "Fragments of Science," "by a kind of inspiration that we rise from the wise and sedulous contemplation of facts to the principles on which they depend." And again, "This passage from facts to principles is called induction, which, in its highest form, is inspiration." We take these inspirations, then, which come through nature as proofs positive of the sociality of God. They are the approaches of the infinite Mind above us to the minds of His intelligent creatures below, and so far speak of His desire for communion. When He spread this feast of reason before His intelligent creation, it was not surely that it should shut Him out from their thoughts, but rather that it should be the medium of communion. We feel warranted, consequently, in regarding the intelligibility of nature as a token of the desire of a social Being like ourselves to have fellowship with us. Hence the *religious* use of nature as we find it in the Hebrew poets is in strict accordance with the order which obtains throughout it. Thus when one of the Hebrew poets speaks of the thoughts of God as being precious and manifold,—“How precious also are Thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them. If I should count them they are more in number than the sand,”—he is simply recognizing that sociality of God which is indicated by the intelligible character of nature. And all through the Psalms we see nature constituting a medium of communion between the human soul and God.

§ 9. If this social element comes out in nature, much more may we recognize it in human nature. If God speaks through an intelligible universe to the intelligent creatures of His hand, much more does He speak to us through man. It has been very properly observed that the progress of our

race has been mainly through great men raised up from time to time. Had it not been for these, natural selection would admittedly have been powerless in promoting the progress of the race.* And this impulse to the race, be it observed, was administered not in a physical way by heredity, but in a spiritual way by thought and action. What, then, is the confession of the really great? Dr. Mozley had a theory which the confession of the really great sustains, that "really great men are less guided by what is called free-will than common minds—they seem rather to follow an impulse beyond themselves."† In other words, they act under a species of inspiration. They have some message to communicate to men, which the great Spirit beyond them prompts, and in the reception of which the advancement of the race is promoted. In his "*Horæ Subsecivæ*" the late Dr. John Brown has called these men "*solar*," and says: "When we meet a *solar* man we feel that it is the inspiration of the Almighty which has given to that man understanding. And it would be well if the world made more of this; that their great men are manifesters of God, 'revealers' of His will, vessels of His omnipotence, and among the very chiefest of His ways and works." And another writer following up Dr. Brown's thought has said: "All true '*solar*' men *do* thus trace up their gifts to this Divine source. In philosophy, we find a Socrates declaring that his wisdom is not his own, but a breath of the divinity within him. In science, we see a Pythagoras, flushed with the joy of geometrical discovery, running to sacrifice a hecatomb of grateful adoration to the Inspirer of this discovery. In morals, we have a Sophocles affirming that in the highest heaven the Divine laws have their birth, and not the race

* Cf. Graham's "*Creed of Science*," pp. 68-74.

† Cf. Mozley's "*Essays, Historical and Theological*," vol. i., p. xxviii.

of mortals did beget them, but the power of God. In music, we have a Haydn, when admired for his genius, lifting up his hands to Heaven, and exclaiming, 'Not mine! Not mine! From God alone it comes!' In painting, we have a Blake declaring, 'He who does not imagine in a stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all.' In poetry, we have a Wordsworth referring to 'the vision and the faculty divine,' 'the fountain-light of all our seeing.' And in religion, we have the prophets of old proclaiming, 'The word of the Lord came to me,' 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me'; and Jesus Himself declaring, of all that He taught and did, 'My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent Me,' 'The words that I speak to you I speak not of myself, but the Father who dwelleth in Me, He does all my works.'"^{*} Through really great men, therefore, we recognize thoughts from beyond coming to the race. Every really great man is a sign to the understanding spirit of the sociality of God. God speaks to us through the great men He raises up and inspires.

§ 10. We are bound to add to all this the fact that there is an inveterate tendency within us to forget the *meaning* of the facts before us because of their regularity of sequence, and so to miss the revelation through admiration of its mere rhythm and order; hence the Infinite Spirit may be speaking by nature and by great men, while our dull ears, through the buzz of "wisdom and of prudence," may ignore the message altogether. God is social, and He seeks fellowship with His creatures. We are wise when we recognize this, and address Him as waiting to hear us and to be gracious. The entire constitution of nature and of man bespeaks a social God.

^{*} Griffiths' "Studies of the Divine Master," pp. ix.-x.

CHAPTER IX.

*GOD TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ADDRESSED
AS SELF-SUFFICING.*

CHAPTER IX.

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§ 1. WE cannot pause with our ascription of freedom and of sociality to God. We are compelled to go farther and ascribe *self-sufficiency* to Him ; and it will be evident in the course of the discussion that it is here the *gracious* character of the Divine dealings has its seat. If God be social, as we have seen, if there must be an element of sociality in the Divine nature corresponding to sociality in human nature, then we are shut up to the alternative of supposing that communion with the creatures was a necessity to Him, in order to some measure of personal satisfaction, or that He had within His own nature the elements needful for communion, and consequently that His “advances” to the creature are entirely of grace. We proceed to show that the former is untenable, and that the latter alone satisfies the necessities of thought.

§ 2. That it is absolutely needful for us to enter this region of highest speculative thought will appear from a few references to current speculations. We shall start with Dr. Martineau. He tries to save his “lonely God” by positing “the cœval existence of matter, as the condition and medium of the Divine agency and manifestation. . . . Stupendous as the chronometry is which the geologist places

at our command, its utmost stretch into the past brings us apparently no nearer to a lonely God ; nature is still there with no signs of recency, but still in the midst of changes which have an immeasurable retrospect. May we not, then, fairly say that the burden of proof remains with those who affirm the absolute origination of matter at a certain or uncertain date ? Failing the proof, we are left with the Divine cause and the material condition of all nature in eternal co-presence and relation, as supreme subject and rudimentary object.* Miss Cobbe again gives us a lonely God in the very title of her little book on prayer, "Alone to the Alone," apparently unconscious of the fact that a lonely Deity would repel rather than attract us. Her pertinent distinction between soliloquy and dialogue or address (p. 21) has a Divine as well as human application, which she seems not to have suspected, and bears upon the essential nature of God.† But other thinkers, not professedly Unitarian in their beliefs, have allowed themselves to slip into a practical adoption of their "lonely God," as if it were the only possible idea. The tendency of Hegelianism, if its disciples be not upon their guard, is towards the notion that the universe consists of relations ; that these relations are unalterable ; and, therefore, it was necessary for the Infinite to have the finite in some shape or form always in relation to it. That we are not misstating the case will appear from the following quotation from Principal Caird : "The Infinite of religion cannot be a mere self-identical Being, but one which contains, in its very nature, organic relation to the finite ; or, rather, it is that organic whole which is the unity of the Infinite and finite. In other words, an Infinite which does not extinguish

* Martineau's "Essays," vol. i., pp. 161-2.

† Appendix. Note F.

the finite as its base, contradictory or negative, must *contain in itself* the determination of the finite. If religion means that only in union with God can any spiritual nature fulfil or realise itself, it follows that there must be something in the nature of God on which the religious relation is based. A necessary relation cannot be one in which there is necessity only on the one side and mere arbitrary will on the other. But this would be implied in conceiving of God as a mere abstract omnipotence, and of the creation of the world as simply the act of His 'mere will and pleasure.' According to this conception, as there is no reason in God why finite spiritual beings should exist rather than not exist, there can be nothing in man which is unfulfilled and unsatisfied save in union with God. To be spiritually united to God is to find in God the end and reason of my being, and to say this is equivalent to saying that the existence of a finite world, or of finite spiritual beings, cannot be ascribed to a mere arbitrary creative will, but springs out of something in the very nature of God; or that the idea of God contains in itself, as a necessary element of it, the existence of finite spirits. Now, that the true idea of the Infinite does contain in it the idea of the finite, or, in less formal terms, that the nature of God would be imperfect if it did not contain in it relation to a finite world, may be shown in various ways. The simplest way in which we can make this thought clear to ourselves is by considering that, conceived as a mere abstract, self-identical Infinite, God would lack that which is one of the most essential elements of a spiritual nature—the element of love. Without life in the life of others a spiritual being would not be truly spirit. To go forth out of self, to have all the hidden wealth of thought and feeling, of which I am capable, called forth in relations to other and kindred

beings, and to receive back again that wealth redoubled in reciprocated knowledge and affection—this is to live a spiritual life; not to do this is to take from our lives all that makes them spiritual. But all this we leave out of our idea of God if we conceive of Him as a self-identical Infinite, complete and self-contained in His own being.”* Now it will appear to every impartial thinker that Principal Caird’s God is just as lonely as Dr. Martineau’s, and that the only difference between the two solutions is that Dr. Caird proposes the necessary creation of finite intelligences as the objective to the Divine mind, with which He solaced Himself in His solitude, while Dr. Martineau thinks He had a “rudimentary object” in *cœval* matter. But the Infinite is in sad loneliness whichever of these ideas we adopt.

§ 3. Before proceeding to show this, however, let us take another quotation. Professor Grote says: “Whether such a thing as morality would be conceivable, if we were any of us the solitary sentient being in creation, is a speculation on which we can hardly enter. We can hardly affirm the contrary, for we suppose an existence of the Deity, good and moral, previous to everything; but I conclude that we should not consider the affixing moral epithets to Him in such a position to have any meaning, unless we suppose in Him the power of terminating the solitude, and, correspondingly, of imagining beings in regard of whom His moral attributes might be exercised.”† We find this writer consequently attributing to God an “*egence*,” or want, of the most imperious kind, for other sentient and moral beings on whom the wealth of His love may be lavished.‡

* Principal Caird’s “Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion,” pp. 250-2.

† “Treatise on the Moral Ideals,” p. 37. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

§ 4. Is it necessary to posit any such lonely Being as this, which professed Unitarians, and others repudiating their creed, really give us? The attempt made by supposing creation a *necessity*, and so the soliloquy of pre-arrangement the sole society of God, before there was anything made that was made, proves fallacious. The thought of finite beings to be evolved in the course of long ages would only make the sense of solitude the more intense; and when the real objective came before God, it would prove utterly inadequate. We have already seen that society to be satisfying must be between equals. The fellowship between the sexes can never be the satisfying sentiment it ought to be until the "equivalence of the sexes" be recognized. Hence we can see from our own experience that *no amount of fellowship with the finite could satisfy the social nature of the Infinite*. The whole notion, therefore, of the needs of the Infinite nature being satisfied through a creation, thus necessary to His own comfort, must be given up. It makes creation a simple act of self-satisfaction on the part of God, and deprives it of all its moral grandeur. If we are brought to this, that creation is necessary to provide a lonely God with society, then the dependence of the Deity on His creatures is established, and the stability of the whole moral system imperilled.

§ 5. It is easy to see that *trust* in God must be most seriously modified upon any such assumption. If I am as needful to God as God is to me, if He would be lonely without me, as I am without Him, then we are simply *fellows in misfortune*, clinging frantically to one another in a universe which threatens us with separation and solitude. But I need something more substantial to trust in than such a Being would be. Unless the Infinite be self-sufficing, He is not the adamant Rock we need amid the vicissitudes

and separations we experience. An Infinite depending for His satisfaction upon the finite is no proper object on whom to rely.

§ 6. Hence it is that we are driven by the analogy, to which we are necessarily committed, to attribute to the Divine Being such self-containedness and such relations within Himself as render Him self-sufficing and independent. We turn consequently from the solitary Being who has been on superficial grounds supposed to fill "eternity's fearful solitude," to another Being whom we can, through our social nature, understand. "The God whom the Athanasian Creed proclaims," says an able writer, "has never been alone. There has been from all eternity the Father, and the Son in the bosom of the Father; these eternal Ones, moreover, have been bound, by the eternal Spirit of love, in love's eternal fellowship. The Father's joy from eternity has been to love the Son. 'Thou lovedst me,' said the Lord Jesus, 'before the foundation of the world.' The Son's joy from eternity has been to love the Father, to trust in Him entirely, to do His blessed will. 'The Lord possessed me,' are His words, 'from everlasting; I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.' No marvel that when such a Being created man, His very first utterance should have been, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.' " *

§ 7. We consequently posit an Infinite at the back of things, who in the Trinity of His persons in the unity of His essence has all the elements of fellowship, and so is self-sufficing and independent. In such a Being we can

* Tait's "Thoughts for the Thoughtful," p. 6; cf. Kidd's masterly "Essay on the Trinity," pp. 208-230; Haig's "Symbolism," pp. 524-44; and also Prof. Wallace's paper in *British and Foreign Evangelical Review*, quoted *ut supra*.

trust with confidence. He dwells not in lonely majesty, but in an eternal fellowship. He is thus the "Blessed God," not the prey of an "egence" of imperious power, but calmly centred in His own perfect nature.* For it is a mistake to suppose, as has been done in this discussion, that "absolute self-sufficiency" on the part of the Infinite implies any "indifference towards others."† This would be to attribute to the Infinite what is an acknowledged deficiency in the creature. We sometimes blame the independent, not for being independent in their circumstances, but for being indifferent to others. We feel certain that independence ought to be used to help those who are in need. The good Samaritan may have been no abler to help than the priest and Levite; but their sin was in being unwilling to help according to their ability. The same criterion applies to God. He is absolutely self-sufficing, but the fellowship of the eternities is the guarantee that He will be gracious.

§ 8. When we rise to such a conception as this, we see in creation and in providence manifestations of *grace*. God has not been compelled by any necessity beyond Him or within Him to enter upon the work of creation or the administration of a universe. He might have dwelt in the eternities in the self-sufficiency of a perfect social nature. But He resolved on creation, and surrounded Himself with beings akin in nature to Himself, and all in the exercise of a sovereign good pleasure. The society provided for the finite is a gracious, yet only feeble, reflection of the perfect society enjoyed by the persons of the Godhead. The environment with which He has surrounded Himself is on the type of His own perfect social nature; social creatures are but reflecting the image of a social God. Hence the

* Appendix. Note G.

† Cf. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," p. 372.

Trinity is no expression of a temporal and economic arrangement, but is an immanent, essential, and eternal truth.*

§9. The relations within the Godhead, therefore, claim our attention. From all eternity God was in possession of full fellowship; the Father's love had its object in the Son and its agent in the Spirit, and the Son responded to the Father's love, returning its full tide, the Spirit once more being the agent; while the Spirit exercised His love through the love of the Father and of the Son. Thus communion of the most perfect character existed from all eternity within the Godhead. And this communion, as already hinted, was not lonely soliloquy, but real dialogue and address. In other words, we have in the fellowship of the persons of the Trinity the first example of efficacious prayer. The prayers of Jesus Christ, as we shall afterwards have occasion to point out, are the expression within human hearing of the desires of the Godhead, and eliciting their due response. The fellowship within the Godhead is the archetype of all true fellowship among the creatures. The fountain-head of prayer is to be found in the Godhead itself. Hence a writer already referred to does not hesitate to say that "the three persons of the Godhead work prayerfully upon one another";† and consequently that it is in the Trinity we have the guarantee and ground of prayer.‡ Prayer consequently becomes a lifting of the human spirit into a Divine life-sphere; a communication to men of some measure of the Divine fellowship. §

* Cf. "Die Lehre vom Gebet aus der immanenten und ökonomischen Trinität," abgeleitet von Dr. Richard Löber, s. 9.

† Löber, *ut supra*, s. 8.

‡ *Ibid.*, s. 31.

§ *Ibid.*, s. 37, also s. 71; cf. also "Prayer as based on the Being of God," by Rev. J. B. Fletcher, M.A., pp. 40, 73, etc.

§ 10. We have already observed that nature is, as a matter of fact, constructed upon the prayer plan. And now we see from the self-sufficiency of the Godhead that it has its archetype and reason within the Divine nature itself. The ineffable communion of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is feebly imaged in the social intercourse of the creatures. Not only so, but we have seen how the lower animals can express by cries and signs of various kinds their wants to the higher race of man; and man can interpret these inarticulate prayers, and respond to them. Are we then to suppose that prayer can thus obtain between lower and higher beings in the scale of existence, but that the prayer plan must suddenly cease when the highest of the animated creation ventures to appeal to the infinite Spirit above him? Is it not more reasonable to believe that the *grace* which is found within the order of nature extends to the relations between the social Being above us, and the intelligent creatures of His hands? Such an interruption of the law of prayer just at the point where it is pre-eminently desirable is contrary to the whole analogy of the system. The fact of our being overshadowed by a "social Trinity," and not by a solitary Being, encourages us in believing that the prayer principle, instead of being broken in the relations between Him and men, will be maintained and illustrated in its full meaning and strength. In truth the prayer from man to God is the admission of man to a measure of that perfect fellowship which obtains between the persons of the adorable Trinity. It is man knocking at the golden gate in hope of participating in that Divine peace and satisfaction which God has enjoyed from all eternity; and the "blessed God" extends the privilege of His fellowship and His peace as a matter of free grace.

§ 11. Hence we recognize and we address God as self-

sufficing. We cannot recognize in creation something necessary to His satisfaction, but a manifestation of sovereign and gracious pleasure. We refuse to bind the free and social Spirit at the back of all with the green withes of necessity; we rather recognize Him as crowned with matchless grace. He will not put us to confusion if we trust Him in the intellectual or in the moral domain. On this ethical basis we may confidently repose. The whole analogy of the system in which we find ourselves points to prayer as a principle; and high above all we recognize fellowship as obtaining between the persons of the adorable Trinity. In the light of all around us, and of all above us, we refuse to be robbed of our privilege of prayer in the kingdom of grace.

PART IV.



Verification.

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CHAPTER X.

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§ 1. **W**E have hitherto been dealing with the reasonableness of prayer, and have succeeded, we hope, in showing that it is eminently reasonable to address the infinite and free and social and self-sufficing Spirit, who is behind all, and who is debarred in no wise from answering our petitions. But it will be said that this is only theory, and that it admits of no real verification; consequently the cautious and scientific mind will not accept an unverified hypothesis. It is needful, therefore, for us to take up in this stage of our work the question of verification, and to determine, if possible, its exact application to the prayer problem before us.

§ 2. And here we must refer to the proposal made in 1872 by an anonymous friend of Professor Tyndall to subject the efficacy of prayer to an experimental test. Under the notion that up to that date efficacious prayer had received *no* verification, he came forward with "Hints towards a Serious Attempt to Estimate its Value."* They amounted substantially to this—that two wards of the same hospital should be taken, the same skill and treatment being administered to the patients, while one of the wards

* *Contemporary Review* for July 1872.

was to be *isolated* from the intercessory prayers of Christendom, the other enjoying them; and then, after three or five years' experiment, the comparative results were to be taken, and thus the action of the supernatural in nature quantitatively determined.

§ 3. The absurdity of the proposal has not been sufficiently exposed. It was *scientifically* absurd, for it implied that experiment is the only way of verifying an hypothesis. Now, so far from this being the case, there are many theories accepted by scientific men which do not admit of verification by experiment at all. Who, for example, will undertake to verify the hypothesis of evolution by experiment? Has any investigator either the time or the appliances needful for the experiment? The nebular theory, the atomic theory, the ether theory—all these, and numbers more, do not admit of verification by experiment. Hence, to quote a writer whose impartiality is beyond question, the fallacy of Dr. Tyndall's friend's proposal "resides in tacitly assuming that verification is the synonym of experiment—that experiment is in every case the only means we have of verifying theory."* Besides, the proposal was absurd by reason of its *anthropomorphism*. For it attributed to the Most High a want of sympathy which we would not expect to find in saintly souls among ourselves. Even supposing that Christendom, through amazing simplicity, had fallen into the proposal of this sceptical inquirer, and had allowed one ward in any hospital to be isolated from its intercessions and its sympathies, are we to attribute such lack of sympathy to Him whom we believe to be at the back of all? This crude anthropomorphism is especially unworthy of a school of thinkers who are never done denouncing anthropomorphism in all the moods and tenses. If it be

* Romanes' "Christian Prayer and General Laws," p. 129.

urged by them that they themselves do not entertain it, but simply suggest it as the belief of others, they should guard themselves against "bearing false witness against their neighbours," and should give us credit for at least sufficient intelligence to expose such a superficial fallacy. Still further, the proposal is *theologically* absurd, for it overlooks the fact that the motive in prayer gives it its ethical value, and consequently a prayer, if presented to satisfy sceptics, could not be recognized as the simple prayer of faith to which professedly the Most High responds. The scepticism underlying the procedure would vitiate the whole experiment. Hence the proposal, no matter how it is taken, is absurd.*

§ 4. As a matter of fact, the experiment was never tried. Christendom could never be reduced to such a state of childishness as to undertake it. Besides, another member of the Agnostic school came forward the very next month to demonstrate from statistics that prayer has been inefficacious. In the *Fortnightly Review* for August 1872, Mr. Galton, famous through his investigations about "Hereditary Genius," gave the public "Statistical Inquiries into the Efficacy of Prayer," in which he proceeds from statistics about the longevity of sovereigns, who are specially prayed for, about the fate of missionaries, about still-births in Christian as compared with irreligious households, about the insanity of the nobility, and suchlike, to declare that prayer has been shown by statistics to have no real efficacy. Mr. Galton's paper forestalled all possibility of the experiment, and demonstrated how easy it is to pile up statistics to support a foregone conclusion. For Mr. Galton forgot that prayer to God is not the wayward expression of spoiled children who refuse to be denied any desire they entertain,

* Appendix. Note H.

but is the humble expression of those who believe that the Father above is infinitely wiser than they are, and is asked to take His own wiser way, should it not coincide with the petitions of His people. The intercessors do not insist on the longevity of sovereigns, or the immunity of missionaries from danger and death, or the immunity of Christian households from still-births, or of nobles from insanity, as covenant engagements with God which He has bound Himself to respect. All these matters are left at His throne of grace to await "the good pleasure of His will." Hence the statistics are strangely irrelevant. They have no bearing upon the real question at issue. As the Editor of the *Spectator* said in his admirable summing up of the controversy in his columns, "We do not doubt that Mr. Galton could disprove the efficacy of (human) love quite as successfully (or unsuccessfully) as the efficacy of prayer."

§ 5. Are we, then, to give up *experiment* as inapplicable in the verification of the efficacy of prayer? By no means; but *only experiment conducted in a sceptical spirit*. Let any individual in "an honest and good heart" test the efficacy of prayer, and sooner or later his experiment will be crowned with success.* The testimony of millions of humble-minded and prayerful people has been in favour of the efficacy of prayer. Outwardly they have not had any marked advantage over prayerless fellows. Those who judge according to appearance may still conclude with the royal preacher, "All things come alike to all." The same accident, the same fatalities may overtake him who prays and him who blasphemes; but inwardly the prayerful person has a perfectly different experience, and could testify with David, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh

* Appendix. Note I. •

unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. . . . The Lord redeemeth the soul of His servants ; and none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate " (Psalm xxxiv. 17-22).

§ 6. The best of reasons, moreover, can be given why prayer should *not* be visibly efficacious, so as to be made a matter of statistics. We quote the eloquent words of the great French preacher, M. Bersier, upon this point : " You wish that prayer should be visibly efficacious, but at what a price it would be ! You would ask for deliverance from sickness and temptation, and immediately your prayer would be heard, and suffering and evil would flee away like a shadow, and upon your smoothed path all asperities would disappear. Your desires, as soon as formed, would be visibly accomplished. And do you not see that all would become Christians like you, and all, like you, would pray ? From love ? Oh, not at all, but from well-ordered interest. And why not pray to this God who replies immediately to whoever invokes Him—this God who encircles His own with an immediate and visible protection ? Come, O ye mercenaries ! come, ye able calculators ! come, and bend the knee. Recompense is guaranteed you. For you heaven is in store, and for you, in the meantime, good fortune here below ! Away with the cross, away with griefs, away with sacrifice. . . . If this is what you wish, very well, the God of the Gospel does not desire it. He has never promised to those who follow Him the visible deliverance ; He has said that they must suffer, as men, in the first place, and, in addition, as Christians. He seems to abandon them to the apparent fatality of circumstances ; nothing distinguishes them in the eyes of the flesh. Stricken just like others, oftentimes more than others, they suffer, they die ; but, under this apparent chance (*hazard*), they

discern a Divine hand, they walk by faith and not by sight; and it is under this austere discipline that there is produced that which is grandest and loveliest on earth—the love which serves God without self-seeking, the love which sacrifices to God its felicity, its security, its joy, and which descends to the sublimest abnegation.” *

§ 7. But if we rested the verification of efficacious prayer upon these private experiences, we should understate most grievously the evidence. There is a series of outstanding *facts* which can, in fairness, only be interpreted on the supposition that prayer has been efficacious. And that this method of verification is valid will appear on the least thought. “How is a theory verified?” asks Professor Bowne. “If it be such that observation is possible, it is verified by observation. But most theories are not susceptible of such a test, and here verification takes another form. In this case, we reason back from the facts to a sufficient cause, and verification consists in showing that only this theory will meet the conditions of the problem. Where such a showing is possible, the theory becomes a matter of knowledge. The demonstration of by far the greater part of scientific hypotheses consists simply in showing that the facts are unintelligible upon any other assumption. No one ever saw an atom, and no one ever will. But the phenomena of matter are inexplicable except upon the atomic theory, and this fact is its only proof. No one ever saw the ether; but we cannot comprehend heat and light without assuming it. To show this is to verify the theory. No one was present when the earth was fluid. We verify such an assumption only by showing that the present state of the earth is incomprehensible without it. The hypothesis of a spiritual Author of nature is verified in the same way;

* Cf. Bersier's “Sermons,” tome iv., pp. 119-120.

and if it can be shown that the physical universe is unintelligible without this assumption, and that from every side we are led down to this ultimate affirmation, then the hypothesis of an intelligent Creator has just the same kind of verification that the bulk of scientific theories have." * In the very same way, then, we take up the Bible as a book, and we affirm that it is an opaque fact in literature on any other supposition than this of the efficacy of prayer.

§ 8. It will not be needful to enter at any length upon the analysis of this unique literature. Its historic growth, its development as an organic whole, the steady yet patient march which it has made from "the ruling ideas in early ages" to the perfect morality of the Sermon on the Mount, constitute interesting inquiries, but we do not deem it needful to enter into them. Our argument only requires that we should emphasize the fact that the authors of the different parts of Revelation were of the *prayerful type*, and their productions prove that their prayers for inspiration were efficacious. If it be said that the inspiration of Scripture is not different in kind, but only in degree, from the inspiration of other literature,—although we do not personally accept such a position,—it strengthens rather than weakens our present argument; for it really shows that the inspirations from above have been wider than man's supplications for them—that the Hearer and Answerer of prayer has outrun man's expectations from Him. Those who looked unto Him have been enlightened, and even those who did not look to Him have been enlightened in their measure too.

§ 9. We have already referred to the fact of *inspiration* being experienced by scientific men as they advance from the induction of facts to the law which they embody; and

Cf. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," pp. 97-8.

we shall have occasion to refer to this again. We merely notice, in passing, these inspirations of science and of literature as incomings of the great Spirit upon the souls of men, and consequently we are not necessitated to enter upon the vexed question of Biblical inspiration in verifying the efficacy of prayer. Granting to the word inspiration the widest meaning, we are surely warranted in pointing out the significant fact that the authors of this incomparable literature were, without exception, prayerful men; and, in looking to God for help in their literary undertakings, they certainly received it. Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the prophets were men of prayer; they avowedly held fellowship with God, and their productions are proof positive that their prayers for light and guidance were efficacious. Let any one try to account for the Bible on the theory that prayer has been a delusion, and that its efficacy is fallacious, and he will require an amount of credulity on the part of the acceptors of his theory which will prove surprising. Sober-mindedness can accept no other conclusion than that the Bible is the production of prayerful men, whose prayers were answered.

§ 10. It has been very properly demonstrated that "the Bible is not such a book as man would have made if he could, or could have made if he would."* It has been asserted with truth that the Bible is a miracle; that is, no known human forces could have united to produce it without the aid of God.† Or, to put the Divine character of the book in the language of a more recent writer, "We

* Cf. the admirable volume by the late Professor Henry Rogers on the "Superhuman Origin of the Bible inferred from Itself," *passim*.

† Cf. "The Bible a Miracle; or, the Word of God its Own Witness," by the Rev. David Macdill.

have," says Dr. Newman Smyth, "in the progress of doctrine in the Bible, a most striking peculiarity of it, which we cannot quietly overlook. Here is an order or evolution of truth which requires as its sufficient cause some one power or law of revelation. What was that guiding principle, that co-ordinating power of the Bible? Such questions press significantly for an answer when we observe the evidences of a higher design in the completed Bible. Like nature itself, amid all its diversities, the Bible is one continuous whole, and one grand design. But that design was not in the minds of the successive workmen. They knew not the perfect whole into which their lives and work, as we now can see, are fitted. Prophets and apostles, called by the Lord to speak to their own age, little knew what a Bible they were making for mankind. That work was beyond their ken; that design was larger than the knowledge of the very men who were providentially called to execute it. Our Bible, in its completeness and its unity, might be a vast surprise to Moses or Isaiah; and Paul, and the last of the disciples, St. John, hardly could have stood far enough away from their own work to see how perfectly it completed the whole. This great design of the religion of Israel is an ultimate fact to be accounted for,—a design which was ages in execution; which was carried on by men separated by hundreds of years; which began in a word of promise, and ended in a fact of redemption in the fulness of time. . . . Its law and progress and unity lie in the one purpose of a self-revealing God."*

§ 11. We hold, consequently, that in the Bible we have a positive proof that God hears and answers prayer. The book is a prayer-product. Eliminate this element of prayer,

† "Old Faiths in New Light," pp. 56-58, in Scribner's Second American Edition,

and the book becomes inexplicable. Accept the theory of efficacious prayer, and the literary work becomes luminous and intelligible. Let men say in addition, if they please, that we have inspiration beyond the Bible, all such assertions are in favour of the idea of communion between God and His intelligent creatures. The gate is open ; communications have been made to men ; "thoughts beyond their thoughts" to authors have been given ; some prayed for their inspiration, and received it in answer to their petitions. Others have got inspirations of inferior quality ; and for them some may never have thought of praying ; but the whole phenomenon of inspiration from beyond constitutes proof positive that God can commune with men ; and that, as a matter of fact, He has done so with incomparable effect within the domain of the Biblical Revelation.

CHAPTER XI.

*THE LIFE OF CHRIST ANOTHER POSITIVE
PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.*

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THE LIFE OF CHRIST ANOTHER POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

§ 1. **W**E have seen that inspiration granted to authors is a positive proof of God's communion with men, and, since the authors of sacred Scripture have given us the most important inspirations, and prayerfully sought them, the Bible as a prayer product so far demonstrates the efficacy of prayer. But we have something more important than a book wherewith to verify the efficacy of prayer. We have a *life*,—the life of Jesus Christ,—and we propose here to show that it is absolutely unintelligible on any other supposition than that prayer was efficacious.

§ 2. We need not pause here upon the question of the *reality* of Christ's life. It is admitted that it must have been lived, or it never could have been written. It is a recognized fact of our mental nature that our imaginations are not absolutely creative; that is to say, we never by imagination can do more than present in new combinations what has been previously in some form before the mind. In other words, imagination works in mosaic, and presents in new and striking forms the little elements of experience previously possessed. But in the biographies of Jesus we have a portrait so original in its character, so distinct from all before or since, that we are shut up to the conclusion that it must have been an actual contribution to human experi-

ence, and could by no possibility have been a literary invention. Human nature has no such creative powers as to imaginatively construct a life like that of Jesus.

§ 3. Now when we take up this unique life of Jesus we find that in it He professes no independence of spirit. His words are, "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, them also doeth the Son likewise." His whole profession was that His works and words were not His own, but the Father's who sent Him. The spirit which He exhibits is that of *perfect dependence*. He *could* not, by which is meant, He *would* not do anything of Himself, but always in felt fellowship with the Father. Prayer was the means employed by Jesus to secure that perfect *rapprochment* of spirit with the Father, out of which all His work must come. Holding His high counsel with the Father, obtaining thereby a perfect knowledge of the Father's views, He met His work and accomplished it in a spirit of perfect unison with God. Tennyson, in speaking of *The Poet*, has said—

"The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

"He saw through life and death, through good and ,
He saw through his own soul;
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,
Before him lay."

It was into this "golden clime" Jesus rose regularly through prayer. He became thus the greatest of the *Seers*; the everlasting will of God unrolled itself before His spiritual vision; He thus learned what the Father's will was, that He might faithfully do it.

§ 4. Hence an essential element of His life was *prayerfulness*. All the evangelists make this plain. "All of them," it has been said, "give prominence to this feature of His earthly life, making it impossible for us even in imagination to separate prayer from the life of Jesus."* We are told of His prayer at His baptism, of His going into a solitary place to pray, of withdrawing into the wilderness to pray, of His continuing all night in prayer to God before the appointment of the disciples, of being alone praying, of His prayer at the transfiguration, of His ceasing on one occasion to pray, and then teaching the disciples the Lord's Prayer; of His praying in connection with various miracles, of His intercessory prayer with the disciples, of His prayer in Gethsemane, upon the Cross, and at the table at Emmaus after the Resurrection. In fact, the life of Jesus is essentially of the prayerful type. It may be safely said that Jesus was *the most prayerful person who ever lived in this world*.

§ 5. Now our contention is that the life of Jesus, unique and perfect as it appears, is proof positive that His prayers were efficacious. Having sought the Father's face in secret, as He recommended His disciples to do, the Father rewarded Him openly in the magnificent life-work He accomplished among men. There are three elements in this demonstration to which we would briefly refer. First, *the sinlessness of Jesus proves the efficacy of His prayers*. That every attempt to cast aspersion upon the character of Jesus has hitherto failed, we assume. We might refer to Ullmann's delightful work on "The Sinlessness of Jesus; an Evidence of Christianity," where the argument is stated with admirable clearness; or to the late Canon Mozley's essay on, "Of Christ Alone without Sin," where the possible objections to it are handled with conspicuous ability. We content ourselves,

* Blaikie's "Glimpses of the Inner Life of our Lord." p. 228.

however, with a quotation from Keim, whose free handling of our Lord's history makes him an unexceptionable witness. He says: "Any one who has given himself to the contemplation of the words and acts of our Lord receives from it irresistibly this impression,—here we have before us a conscience which has never felt the sting of the sense of guilt. And this is not a case of a moralist of a low or easy standard of morality. Oh no! It is He who branded with the character of sin a bare look, an idle word—and, behind the veil of outward actions, all impurity of the heart and motives. He strongly rebuked His age; He made His disciples blush for their weaknesses; He made them pray for the forgiveness of their sins. But He, the Man of the most absorbing vocation, of the vastest mission, He who was called upon every day to make His sublime spirit bend to the requirements of the engagement by which He had bound Himself to a life of humility and of self-renunciation, of gentle endurance, and of silent submission,—He never prayed for pardon for Himself, not even at Gethsemane or Golgotha. He walks with perfect constancy in the sunshine of the paternal love of God; He compels other men to believe in His perfect goodness; He pronounces forgiveness upon sinners in the name of God; He dies for them, and ascends to heaven to take His place upon the judgment seat of the all-holy God." * Now we assume that Jesus prayed for deliverance from evil, as He directed His disciples to do; and consequently we maintain that this greatest miracle of all history, a sinless Man in such a sinful world, is proof positive that the prayers He presented to the Most High were efficacious.

§ 6. Secondly, *the miracles Jesus Christ performed were proofs positive of the efficacy of His prayers.* The reason why we touch upon this point is to emphasize the relation

* "Der Geschichtliche Christus," s. 109, etc.

our Lord's miracles bear to prayer. An attentive study of the Gospel miracles will show that they were *all professedly done through prayer to the Father*. In many cases we see Jesus praying previous to the performance of the miracles ; in the other cases we have every reason to believe that the prayer was offered, though not audibly. The actual miracle was always accepted by Christ as an answer to prayer. Now, when we take with us the fact of Christ's sinlessness, of His perfect *rapprochement* with the Father's will, we can see how *reasonable* it is to believe that the sinless Man should be endowed with such marvellous dominion over nature, and by prayer work incomparable wonders.* Perfect will had committed to it perfect power. The dominion of man over nature, which had been lost through sin, is here restored to the sinless representative who in the fulness of time appears.

§ 7. We have already referred to the alleged incompatibility of miracles with the reign of law. We have made it plain, we hope, that the persistence of the present system has for its basis not physical necessity, but the "good pleasure" of the Great Spirit who will not put His creatures to intellectual confusion. The reality of the Gospel miracles will put no clear thinker to intellectual confusion, especially when we perceive their glorious moral purpose and meaning.† They were part and parcel of the revelation of God which Jesus conveyed ; they cannot be separated from His moral teaching, which was interwoven with the miracles all through ; they were simply the command over nature which a perfectly holy and sinless Being, with corresponding insight, may reasonably be supposed to acquire ; and they

* Cf. Godet's "Conférences Apologétiques," No. III., "Les Miracles de Jésus Christ," pp. 17-31.

† Appendix. Note J.

threaten no science properly so called now. As a timely demonstration of the accord existing between Jesus and the Father, they served a most important purpose. But we do not insist on miracles as existing now; rather do we accept the conclusion that for wisest purposes they have long since ceased.* As, however, the life of Jesus Christ would be unintelligible without them, we accept them in their entirety, and point to them as proof positive in our Lord's time of the efficacy of prayer.

§ 8. Thirdly, *the originality of Christ's character and teaching is another positive proof of the efficacy of prayer.* It may be safely said that in the antecedents of Christ we can find no sufficient reason for His peculiar characteristics and doctrine. He was not what the Jews expected with the prophetic books in their hands for centuries. Jesus was cast in no mould of Jewish prejudice; to the surprise of all, He proved a very cosmopolitan in His toleration and His sympathies. He was, moreover, as far in advance of every *heathen* ideal. Neither Jewish nationalism nor Pagan culture can account for the message and mission of Jesus. He came to establish a kingdom not by force of arms, nor by worldly expedients of any kind, but by the force of love and from within. To triumph over human sin and passion He became a sacrifice Himself; and now He reigns over Christendom and far beyond it from His Cross.† Now our contention is, that if the prayers of Christ had not been efficacious, no such original and influential career could have taken place in history. For it is plain that prayer was the sheet anchor of Jesus; it is plain that He, beyond all other

* Appendix. Notes K and L.

* Cf. Dr. Matheson's interesting Essay, published in the *Contemporary Review*, upon the "Originality of the Character of Christ"; also Harris's "Great Teacher," Essay II.

men, prayed without ceasing ; and that He recommended prayerfulness to all His people. To suppose that He was deceived in His doctrine of the efficacy of prayer and, notwithstanding the deception, lived the life He lived and died the death He died, is beyond all our powers of credulity.

§ 9. There is one point about the prayers of Christ to which we would, in conclusion, refer, as it bears upon the matter now before us. It has been asserted by the Rev. F. W. Robertson, and endorsed by others, that in one case, at least, our Lord's prayer did not succeed—in other words, was inefficacious—viz., when in Gethsemane He prayed that the cup might pass from Him.* It is argued from this refusal of Christ's petition to the possible refusal of ours, and that prayer with Christ, as with us, must be merely "to change the will human into submission to the will Divine." But there is no necessity for supposing any refusal on the Father's part of the petition of the self-sacrificing Son. The deliverance, which in another place we are told He sought with strong crying and tears, "and WAS HEARD IN THAT HE FEARED," was given Him in the Resurrection, the calm assurance of which delivered Him meanwhile from His intolerable mental agony.† Hence we decline to accept the interpretation which suggests that even in one instance *Christ's* prayer was inefficacious. *His* prayers were always answered, because His prayers expressed perfect unison with the Father's will, and perfect loyalty to the Father's honour and glory.

§ 10. We might have entered upon Christ's *doctrine* about prayer ; but as we are here simply adducing instances

* "Sermons," Fourth Series, No. III. ; cf. also James Freeman Clarke's "Christian Doctrine of Prayer," pp. 71-85.

* Cf. Dr. John Brown's "Exposition of Hebrews," vol. i., pp. 255-6.

where prayer has been actually answered, we deem it needless to do so. We have already noticed how, in His exposition of what prayer is, He gives us the line of analogy which we have tried faithfully to follow in our argument, and upon His precepts on the subject we need not insist or enlarge.* We content ourselves with maintaining that prayer proved efficacious in the case of Christ, else His incomparable life becomes totally inexplicable and opaque.

* Appendix. Note M.

CHAPTER XII.

*THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY ANOTHER
POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY
OF PRAYER.*



CHAPTER XII.

THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY ANOTHER POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

§ 1. **T**HE life of Jesus, as we have seen, was so constructed as to be only explicable on the supposition of the efficacy of prayer. Its apparent failure and its real success pronounce it to be *par excellence* a prayer-product. And now we are to advance to the consideration of Christianity, and to ask calmly if its progress can be at all accounted for without the supposition of the efficacy of prayer.

§ 2. And here we must carefully consider on what lines the Christian life has been constructed. Now it so happens that Christianity has been, for the most part, embraced by the *poor*. The policy of the poor Galilean Peasant, who founded the Christian system, was to devote His strength to the conversion of the poor. It was on this account that the imprisoned Baptist began to think that perhaps another Messiah should be expected by the people (cf. Matt. xi. 3-6). It was among the poor and the heavy-laden that the cause at first made progress (Matt. xi. 28-30). Besides, in coming to Jesus and espousing His cause, the poor and weary ones received no *worldly* compensations. Some got their bodies cured, and once or twice a miraculous meal, but no one who followed Christ in hope of worldly rewards received them. Judas Iscariot set the tragedy of worldly expectation and its disappointment in unmistakable relief. The fol-

lowers of Christ were made able-bodied, if they happened to be sick, but with a view to their helping themselves and other people in the spirit of industry and of philanthropy.

§ 3. What did the Apostles gain by following Christ? It is easy to say now that they gained unprecedented influence in human history, and that from their thrones they are at this moment ruling the world under Jesus. But had they any conception of the mighty meaning of their careers? Could this thought of posthumous influence and tardy fame have in the least sustained them in presence of the difficulties, persecution, and martyrdom which befell them? Every impartial mind must admit that no worldly compensation ever lured these meek men on to their inheritance of the earth.

§ 4. What was true of the Apostles has been the rule of the Christian life ever since. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. i. 26-29). "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him? But ye have despised the poor" (James ii. 5-6). From the very first, therefore, the poor and the heavy-laden were attracted to Christianity; they were attracted by no thought of *worldly* advantage since such mercenary motives have, as a rule, been discouraged and disappointed, and the same classes have been "the bone and sinew" of the system ever since. Rich people do occasionally embrace Christianity, but they have always been the

exceptions and not the rule, and worldliness has never been any *large* factor in the progress of the system.

§ 5. Moreover, the way in which the efficacy of prayer has been realized by Christians in all ages goes to substantiate this position. We concede to our opponents the fact that the sensible signs they demand as proofs positive of the efficacy of prayer are not granted, and for the very sufficient reason that, if they were, the Christian Church would be deluged with mere mercenaries. But just on this account we argue that Christians must have had *spiritual* compensation, else they could not have continued on their tried and desolate way. Called "Christians" first at Antioch, "Christians," and not *Jesuites* or *Messianites*, the "Greeks" being so influential as to give the name to the infant Church,* they soon discovered that it was a usual thing, as Peter puts it in his first Epistle, to "suffer as a Christian." They could not mistake their Lord's meaning when He said, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, WITH PERSECUTIONS, AND IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE" (Mark x. 29-30).† The compensations in the present life required to be backed up by the promise of eternal life in the world to come, because of their accompanying persecutions. The history of Christianity as a whole, and the present experience of Christians, go to demonstrate that the compensations are mainly

* Cf. Acts i. 20, 26. In the former verse the reading, according to Tischendorf and Tregelles, is *Ελληνας*, not *Ελληνιστὰς*; see also Dr. Orlando T. Dobbin's "Tentamen Antistraussianum," pp. 60-71.

† Appendix. Note N.

spiritual in character. For suppose that the compensations were of a worldly character, that the "hundredfold" actually came to professing Christians upon worldly lines, they would beat hollow every other "investment." No stock-jobbing nor manipulation of the money market could compete with a *hundredfold* of recompense. The "knowing ones" in such a case would universally embrace such a system, and the triumph of Christianity would be as sudden and as complete as the most sanguine and impatient could desire. But it so happens that the compensations are not so palpable as to allure the worldly-minded. They remain so far removed by sense and sight as to lead worldly people to ignore, if not deny, their existence altogether. Hence we maintain that the main portion of the Christian's compensation is spiritual both in this world and in the next. We deliberately add "and in the next," because the superficial objections to the Christian ideal of the future life rest for the most part upon the assumption that believers hope for "worldly" compensations in the other world. Whereas the fact is that no sober-minded Christian expects luxurious idleness or a kingdom of ease beyond the grave; he expects no "eternity of the tabor," as the rhetorician of Positivism has called it; but he hopes and longs for another life of fuller consecration unto and fuller fellowship with God.

§ 6. We thus argue from the *unworldliness* of the Christian system to the absolute efficacy of Christian prayer. We argue that the system has been so moulded upon unworldly lines, that unless the suffering saints had been supported from unseen sources, they must have succumbed. Our argument will not, we trust, be mistaken. It is the unworldliness of the compensations of Christianity, taken as a whole, which constitutes a striking positive proof of the efficacy of Christian prayer. This will enable us to

estimate at its proper value the attempt made by such historians as Gibbon and Lecky to minimise the significance of the Christian testimony. Gibbon attempts to account for the progress of Christianity by assigning five causes for it, which have a natural explanation, and are, he imagines, sufficient.* But it has been clearly demonstrated that in his estimate he is totally mistaken.† Lecky again would have us to believe that the history of the Christian success may be explained on natural principles. "No other religion," he asserts, "under such circumstances, had ever combined so many distinct elements of power and attraction. . . . The polytheist, admitting that Christianity might possibly be true, was led by a mere calculation of prudence to embrace it, and the fervent Christian would shrink from no suffering to draw those whom he loved within its pale. Nor were other inducements wanting. To the confessor was granted in the Church a great and venerable authority, such as the bishop could scarcely claim. To the martyr, besides the fruition of heaven, belonged the highest glory on earth. By winning that blood-stained crown, the meanest Christian slave might gain a reputation as glorious as that of a Decius or a Regulus. His body was laid to rest with a sumptuous splendour; his relics, embalmed or shrined, were venerated with an almost idolatrous homage. The anniversary of his birth into another life was commemorated in the Church, and before the great assembly of the saints his heroic sufferings were recounted. How, indeed, should he not

* Appendix. Note O.

† Among other refutations of Gibbon see the admirable "Apology for Christianity in a Series of Letters addressed to Edward Gibbon, Esq.," by R. Watson, D.D., F.R.S., Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge.

be envied? He had passed away into eternal bliss. He had left on earth an abiding name. By the 'baptism of blood' the sins of a life had been in a moment effaced."* But surely this is an utterly insufficient account of the heroism of the first Christian martyrs. Granting that when the Church got powerful after Constantine, a certain worldly halo might reasonably be expected to encircle the martyrs of the faith, which might make martyrdom an object of desire, this will not at all account for the heroism of the earlier martyrs. Was it the hope of posthumous fame which sustained Stephen in his agony? And did natural principles alone obtain when men and women were tortured, not accepting deliverance? When "others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented (of whom the world was not worthy), they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth,"—when, we say, all this was experienced, were the witnesses, in Old Testament, or New Testament times, fortified only by natural principles? Or is it more reasonable to believe that they found their refuge in God, and that their appeals to Him had proved efficacious? †

§ 7. We do not, of course, mean to assert that constancy under great trials and the facing of death itself constitute proof positive of the truth of the principles for which the martyrs suffered. "Every religion," it has been properly said, "nay, every absurd sect of every religion, has had its zealots, who have not scrupled to maintain their principles at the expense of their lives; and we ought no more to

* "History of European Morals," Third Edition, vol. i., pp. 387-90.

† Appendix. Note P.

infer the truth of Christianity from the mere zeal of its propagation, than the truth of Mahometanism from that of a Turk. When a man suffers himself to be covered with infamy, pillaged of his property, and dragged at last to the block or the stake, rather than give up his opinion, the proper inference is, not that his opinion is true, but that he believes it to be true ; and a question of serious discussion immediately presents itself—upon what foundation has he built his belief ? This is often an intricate inquiry, including in it a vast compass of human learning ; a Brahmin or a Mandarin, who should observe a missionary attesting the truth of Christianity with his blood, would, notwithstanding, have a right to ask many questions, before it could be expected that he should give an assent to our faith. In case, indeed, of the Apostles, the inquiry would be much less perplexed ; since it would briefly resolve itself into this—whether they were credible reporters of facts, which they themselves professed to have seen ; and it would be an easy matter to show that their zeal in attesting what they were certainly competent to judge of, could not proceed from any alluring prospect of worldly interest or ambition, or from any other probable motive than a love of truth.”* But our deduction from the heroism of the early martyrs is simply this,—that, deprived of every earthly support, and leaning on God only, they were enabled by Him to witness a good confession. “They looked unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed.” All the persistent effort which has been made to minimise the significance of Christian patience under persecution, cannot rob us of the testimony it affords to the efficacy of prayer. The witnesses were prayerful men and women ; they had no possible personal ends to serve by their testi-

* “Watson’s Apology,” *ut supra*, pp. 8-9.

mony; and they showed in their beautiful heroism that the help they hoped for had been granted.

§ 8. Of course there has been variation in the matter of the prayerfulness. Some Christians pray more than others. As a rule, it has been the individuals who have had most to suffer or most to do who have prayed the most. Around the throne of grace have gathered, as there gathered round the Master in the days of His flesh, the weary and the heavy-laden. And their experience has been that they got through prayer what they could not get elsewhere—a true unburdening. No knowledge of the laws of nature can supply the place of fellowship with God. Prayer has supplied the wants of the weary and the heavy-laden, and through it, as through no other medium, have they found rest. The question of Macbeth to the doctor—

“ Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ? ”—

this question, we say, all doctors of medicine or of science must answer in the negative. Before it all are non-plussed. But God can answer it affirmatively through responses to prayer. The equanimity of Christian experience, in presence of suffering and of trial in their most aggravated forms, can only be accounted for by supposing prayer to have been, and to be still, efficacious. In *hospitals for incurables* we have found proofs positive of the reality of religion and of the efficacy of prayer, which cast all scientific objections to the winds, and convinced us, if outward evidence had been needful, that sufferers had still access to the Most High and consolation from Him.*

* Appendix. Note Q.

CHAPTER XIII.

*THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION ANOTHER
POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF
PRAYER.*

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THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION ANOTHER POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

§ 1. **I**N venturing to adduce the history of civilization as proof positive of the efficacy of prayer, we are at once reminded of the fact that various writers have attempted to account for civilization in such a way as to represent it as in no respect a prayer-product. To go no farther back than Buckle, we find, to use the words of Professor Jevons, that he “undertook to write the ‘History of Civilization in England,’ and to show how the character of a nation could be explained by the nature of the climate and the fertility of the soil. He omitted to explain the contrast between the ancient Greek nation and the present one; there must have been an extraordinary revolution in the climate or the soil. Auguste Comte detected the simple laws of the course of development through which nations pass. There are always three phases of intellectual condition—the theological, the metaphysical, and the positive. Applying this general law of progress to concrete cases, Comte was enabled to predict that in the hierarchy of European nations Spain would necessarily hold the highest place. Such,” continues Mr. Jevons, “are the parodies of science offered to us by the *positive* philosophers.”*

§ 2. Draper at a later date has treated us to “A History

* “Principles of Science,” pp. 760-1.

of the Intellectual Development of Europe," and to the "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science." As a physiologist, he proposes to account for European development upon physiological principles. History is to be looked at through physiological spectacles, and through these alone, and no wonder he says that it "presents a new aspect to us" under such conditions. The analogy which he works out between the individual organism and the race is *necessarily superficial*, and can give no adequate account of such a complex problem as human progress. An able critic of the first of Draper's works has said: "In giving his sketch of Greek culture he introduces a superficial account of the Greek philosophy, evidently drawn from second-rate sources, But in his whole narration about European civilization he totally ignores its mental, moral, and metaphysical sciences. A man who can write a history of 'The Intellectual Development of Europe,' and say nothing of the systems of Descartes, Malebranche, and Spinoza, pass over Leibnitz and Kant with a word or two, utterly neglect Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, not refer to Cousin, and pass by in silence Reid, Stewart, Mill, and Hamilton, must have a very singular notion of the task he has set before himself. . . . Physiology is excellent and useful in its place, but it is not ethics, it is not metaphysics, it is not theology—nor does it give the law even to history. History includes it, but it includes a vast deal more, the development of man's whole nature, under a Divine guidance towards the highest moral and spiritual ends. And this development and those ends are to be explained, if at all, not on physiological, but on moral and spiritual principles. Providence, and not natural law, controls the course of history and determines the destiny of the race." *

* Cf. Dr. H. B. Smith's "Faith and Philosophy," pp. 354-7.

§ 3. Of the second work of Dr. Draper we cannot speak in more favourable terms. It is an attempt, and as many passages show, a superficial attempt, to fasten the responsibility of Roman Catholic conservatism upon the whole of Christendom. Dr. Newman Smyth has denominated Draper with justice a scientific demagogue, and has pointed out how, in this book upon the "Conflict of Religion and Science," it never occurs to the author "to spoil his declamation by giving an exact definition of either."* Already the popularity of the books, which was mainly in consequence of their hostile attitude towards religion, is showing signs of decay, and they are sure to be esteemed in the course of a very short time at their very moderate value.

§ 4. We assume, then, that the accounts of civilization hitherto attempted, in which the religious element is sought to be ignored or to be discounted as hostile, are already deemed by thinking men insufficient. We proceed consequently to give some account, necessarily brief, of the progress of civilization. And here we note in passing the fact that human societies have *not* been raised to their state of civilization by "natural selection." "It has not been in the manner implied in the doctrine of Darwin and evolution," says Graham, "that man's mental and moral constitution has been developed, whatever be the truth as regards his physical. It has not been by the superior man winning in the battle of life, and then transmitting his genius to his children, who thus became the origin of a chosen race, that the great man has profited either his species or himself. He has served his kind by the communication of his special secret, new truth, superior insight, higher quality of soul, to some of his brother men the likeliest himself, and these again to others, till in time the

* "Old Faiths in New Light," Scribner's Edition, p. 22.

whole mass of men becomes possessed of his idea, and leavened with his spirit. He served men not by the hereditary transmission, but by the direct communication, of his soul. Often the man of genius or hero did not win in the battle of life—rarely or never he transmitted his genius to his children, even if he had any. 'He did better ; he gave the benefit of it at once to all who could profit by it, and ultimately to the human race. At least this is what the real and greatest benefactors of their kind have done—the discoverers, inventors, philosophers, poets, lawgivers, and founders of religions, if not the warrior kings and conquerors. Neither Plato, nor Mahomet, nor Columbus, nor Shakespeare, nor Newton produced appreciable effect on the world through the transmission of their peculiar qualities by heredity. They did not thus distribute the germs of their genius at last through their countrymen and mankind. The manner of their action on men was different ; but the result was more speedy as well as more effectual. They delivered their message, did their work, and others found it directly profitable and acceptable to them. They lifted up the others nearer to their own sublime heights ; and by such a process it has ever been that real progress has been made—by the species as a whole endeavouring to expand itself to the dimensions of these kingly spirits, who have been its true educators, improvers, and benefactors." *

§ 5. We proceed consequently to inquire, What share have the prayerful Christ and His prayerful followers had in the work of civilization ? If it must be admitted that Christianity has been a prime civilizing factor, then civilization itself becomes of necessity a proof positive of the efficacy of prayer. Now it will not be difficult to show that civilization has been in very large measure a Christian

* "The Creed of Science," pp. 73-74.

product. Let us start with the Apostolic times. The Apostolic Church was a missionary church. To what races did it address itself? To what the Germans call the "culture-peoples," as distinguished from the "nature-peoples." It was to Greece and Rome, the most civilized nations of their time, that the Apostles carried the message of Christianity. They found in the Greek and Roman civilizations such elements as slavery, contempt for human as well as animal life, and the degradation of women. Without encouraging any servile war or becoming agitators in a secular sense, they dropped into the minds of men those seeds of Gospel truth which have resulted in the fruits and flowers of liberty, of the sanctity of life, and of the elevation of women.* It cannot be doubted for a moment by any impartial student of history that "Christ's religion has, in fact, taken the lead in schemes for the benefit of human society."† It may be further shown that Christianity embodied the good elements in the Oriental and Hellenic civilizations, and passed these on to the later times. It is a large subject, and our limits compel us to be brief; but it may be shown that the Oriental tendency has been to turn the spirit outwards to the world without, seeking for objects of reverence, of support, and of guidance; the Hellenic tendency has been to turn the spirit inwards upon itself, teaching it to rely upon its own impulses and powers. In other words, the Oriental deals with the objective as an ideal, while the Hellenist deals with the subjective, becomes conscious of human dignity, and full of the spirit of enterprise and freedom.‡ Now Christianity embraces these two tendencies; it presents a

* Cf. Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. ii., *passim*.

† Cf. Woolsey's "Religion of the Present and of the Future," p. 396.

‡ Cf. Hebbard's "Secret of Christianity," *passim*.

perfect Saviour as man's grandest ideal, about whom he should become enthusiastic; and it calls upon man to depend upon this Saviour in all his trials and temptations. Thus the Hellenic and Oriental factors are blended in this enthusiasm for a personal Saviour which Christianity inculcates.*

§ 6. But now as we pass onwards we find that the Catholic Age,—as, following Mr. Hebbard, we may call the Middle Ages,—instead of being the perpetual antagonist of science and civilization, as Draper would represent it, has been fruitful in civilizing elements. The Church of the Middle Ages made mistakes doubtless, and we have no wish to represent it as perfect. But along with its mistakes there were decided successes. We mention two only. If asceticism was in some respects a mistake, its *consecration of labour* laid the foundation of modern industry, and was a distinct contribution to civilization. To the Church the world owes the change from what Neander called “the aristocratism of ancient civilization” to the modern ideas of industry as in no respect degrading.† If, again, its appearance as a world-power was a mistake, its substitution of *feudalism* for vandalism was a distinct contribution to human progress. Feudalism transferred the basis of authority from the personal to the territorial, and out of feudalism grew the *patriotism* which will die for fatherland, a *comprehensive* spirit which had no existence in the Grecian or Roman civilizations. The Greek or the Roman would die for his *city*, but it was beyond their grasp to take a whole country, a broad fatherland, into their sympathies. “Classical civilization,” says Mr. Hebbard, “founded upon

* Appendix. Note R.

† Cf. Bayne's “Biographical, Critical, and Miscellaneous Essays,” p. 36, etc.

a purely personal basis, was of too subtle and delicate a nature to thrive except beneath the guardianship of city walls, in some few favoured spots of Southern Europe. Carried over a wide area, by the brute force of the Roman soldiery, it had formed a frail and transient organization of society, the quick decay of which had only been hastened by the shock of invasion. The Empire fell, because classical civilization was adapted only to a city and not to a continent. A new spirit and a new order of ideas were needed to permanently civilize the wide area of Europe. The basis of such a civilization it was the mission of Catholic feudalism to supply. Its first work was to repress that vagrancy natural to the Germanic bands—natural, indeed, to all men whose only bond of union is the sentiment of fidelity to their chieftain. It accomplished this by that substitution of a territorial for a personal basis of sovereignty which we have already described. Instead of the old Germanic impulse which ranged a roving band of warriors around the standard of some favourite leader, it substituted the new sentiment of attachment to the soil. It made the permanent possession of the land the sole source of all social pre-eminence and political authority. Thus the nomadic instinct was restrained, and a fixed and stable population was formed. . . . Under the subtle and mysterious feeling of attachment to the soil which feudalism had generated, they came to recognize each other as inhabitants of a common country. . . . The civic patriotism of classical life had been replaced by that more comprehensive love of country which forms the absorbing political sentiment of modern times.”* We shall have something further to say in the next chapter about our indebtedness to the Middle Ages.

* Hebbard's "Secret of Christianity," pp. 124-6.

§ 7 We might tarry over the Reformation period and show that to Christianity the world owes the great doctrine of equality, with all its civilizing results. We content ourselves with another quotation from Mr. Hebbard, whose book deserves most attentive study. "Catholicism taught to Europe that all men were equal within the pale of the Church, all having the same needs and the same Deliverer. But it frowned upon every assertion of political rights ; it inculcated instead the duty of resignation and passive obedience. At last Protestantism came, with its fierce vindication of human rights, but not in the narrow and selfish spirit of the ancient Greek. Men, already taught that they were equal in religious life, began to learn that they were equal before the law---that all might properly claim the same political privileges and immunities. Evidently, then, the sentiment of equality is not so simple in its origin as it seems. Its elements have been gathered from the most divergent systems of thought, and have been combined only through the influence of Christian civilization." *

§ 8. We now pass to the present missionary epoch of Christianity, when it is rivalling the spirit of the Apostolic times. Every impartial observer must own that Christianity is at present *the prime factor* in the world's civilization. Who have done most for the "nature-peoples" ? Not certainly any apostles of culture as distinct from Christianity, but the Christian missionaries. Who is it who take the side of the savage races against the selfish and cruel practices of so-called civilized traders ? Always the Christian missionaries. Who have accomplished most in the elevation of

* *Ut supra*, p. 158 ; also Bayne's Essay on "Characteristics of the Christian Civilization," in his "Biographical, Critical, and Miscellaneous Essays," pp. 22-62.

savage people into some measure of civilization? Undoubtedly the Christian missionaries. Christianity is at the present time the prime culture-factor in the world.*

§ 9. On the other hand it can be shown that "the advance of science does not, in fact, secure the advance of society, notwithstanding all the efforts of Christians and other benevolent persons. As far as the past can teach us, science may add indefinitely to its stores, while society continues corrupt or degenerate. There are armies of thieves and of reprobates, worse than heathen, within sound of the voice of the great lecturers of Paris. Officers of preventive and of correctional police have plenty of work to do in all large cities, both in Europe and this free land [*i.e.*, America]. In some respects the dangerous classes in large towns are worse than they were. They know more and are more excitable. Their knowledge, having nothing to do with rules of conduct and the meaning of life, being, in fact, such as a class of men without religion would gather, makes them craftier, more able to combine, more able to evade justice." †

§ 10. It appears, consequently, that to write the history of civilization without acknowledging Christianity is like writing the play of Hamlet with the Prince of Denmark left out. Civilization before Christianity in Greece, in Rome, in India, and in China, is not to be compared with civilization since Christianity has had its hand in it. And hence we argue that a system whose spirit has been prayerful in all ages, and which has made such deep impressions upon human progress, has secured in civilization itself a proof positive of the efficacy of prayer. The greatest

* Cf. on this whole subject "Modern Missions and Culture; their Mutual Relations," by Dr. Gustav Warneck, which has been translated admirably by Dr. Thomas Smith, of Edinburgh.

† Cf. Woolsey's "Religion of the Present and of the Future," p. 396.

contributors to the civilization of mankind have been the prayerful men and women who in season and out of season have toiled in the profoundest philanthropy for the elevation of their fellows. Our civilization would not be what it is to-day, but something altogether different and inferior, had not men cried to God for help in their labours, and been sustained in presence of apparent defeat and manifold difficulties until the blessings came. Civilization is itself a standing proof of what prayer can obtain.

CHAPTER XIV.

*THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT A FINAL POSITIVE
PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER*

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THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT A FINAL POSITIVE PROOF OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

§ 1. **I**N drawing the present section to a close, we are anxious to adduce a final positive proof of the efficacy of prayer from the prevailing scientific spirit. Notwithstanding the hostility which characterizes some possessors of this spirit to the practice of prayer, it may be shown that they are indebted for it to prayerful predecessors. For none but a superficial observer will imagine for a moment that the scientific spirit is instinctive ; it has been the growth of long centuries. In this matter, as in so many others, the scientific men of to-day are " the heirs of all the ages."

§ 2. What, then, do we mean by the modern scientific spirit ? We mean the devotion to the study of nature which only *a love for nature* and a *belief in its rationality* could produce. These two elements—a love for nature and a belief in its rationality—seem so simple, so natural, and so universal at present, that few ever think of investigating their origin and history. Now, so far from a love for nature as such being natural and universal, it has not characterized all races, just as it does not at present characterize all men. We meet multitudes who have no genuine love for nature ;

we may go to races inhabiting the very fairest scenes, and yet we have no reason to believe that they have any genuine love for nature.

§ 3. When, farther, we pass up the stream of history, and fasten upon the Greek civilization, we are warranted in believing that the Greeks were strangers to that love for nature which we deem essential to the scientific spirit. For by love for nature we mean something altogether different from physical *enjoyment* of nature. This the Greek doubtless possessed and expressed in his literature ; but the "subtle sympathy with nature and her ways" he did not entertain. "The merely physical enjoyment," says Mr. Hebbard, "is sterile ; it is destructive of thought rather than creative. It is content with the passing moment, and does not seek to perpetuate itself in the forms of poetry and art. Nature, therefore, when it exerts only this sensuous influence upon a people, can never become the theme or the inspiration of any great intellectual labour. At the very best it can only furnish the background of the picture. Always some human or divine personality stands as the central and chief object of interest. This simple distinction seems often to be strangely overlooked. In this way many have been led to deny that the Hellenic genius was devoid of a true love for nature, and have laboriously compiled quotations in support of their opinion. But their proofs are always irrelevant to the issue. The passing allusion of a poet to some beauty of natural scenery attests nothing to the purpose. 'The Greek poet,' as Schiller has well said, 'is certainly in the highest degree correct, faithful, and circumstantial in his descriptions of nature ; but his heart has no more share in his words than if he was treating of a garment, a shield, or a suit of armour.' His description is merely incidental. He grasps only the outward and sen-

suous element, and never discerns that nature has an inner life as mysterious and suggestive as that of man." *

§ 4. In strict accordance with this, we find that there was an "almost utter failure of the Greek in physical research." It will be said in refutation of this that Aristotle made a series of observations in natural history which appear even now marvellous. But "amid all the encyclopædic studies of the great Stagyrte, extending over so many different departments of physical research, no man can lay his hand upon a single discovery, or one permanent contribution, made to the wealth of science. In his own proper field Aristotle stands unrivalled and unapproachable. But his physical studies remain a true type of Greek empiricism, and a lasting monument of its utter worthlessness when applied to the study of nature." † This has been justly attributed to the fact that Aristotle admitted no source of knowledge but sensation, and so was shut up to that bare enumeration of particulars and logical deduction from them which constituted all the inductive process he knew. His method was necessarily barren.

§ 5. And in strict accordance with what has been aduced, the only scientific advance made among the Greeks was by the schools of idealism. It was the school of Pythagoras which invented what poor arithmetic the Greeks possessed. To the same school was due the rudiments of geometry, while Plato invented the geometrical analysis. It was the Pythagoreans also who began the systematic study of botany, of medicine, and of acoustics.‡

§ 6. Another tendency was needed to create that love for nature on which the scientific spirit depends. This

* "Secret of Christianity," *ut supra*, p. 134.

† *Ibid.*, p. 187.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 178—180.

tendency was Oriental, and while it asserted itself for a season at Alexandria, it was introduced to Europe through the fathers and the schoolmen. It was the contribution, as Mr. Hebbard has conclusively shown, of the Catholic Age to human progress. In these Middle Ages which are now so decried there arose and was fostered the love for nature which is essential to the scientific spirit. "In the Middle Ages," he says, "this sentiment gradually incorporated itself into the popular life; it advanced in the exact degree that the old Pagan spirit vanished before the influences of Catholic Christianity. It has been remarked, for instance, by one profoundly versed in early Germanic literature, that very few traces of a sentiment for nature are to be found in the 'Niebulungen' or 'Gudrun,' while they abound in the chivalric poetry of the Minnesingers. Evidently this fact is inexplicable, if there is, as German patriotism is so ready to maintain, a characteristic bent of the Germanic mind towards the contemplation of nature. On the other hand, the apparent anomaly disappears in a moment in the light of the theory which we are now advancing. The 'Niebulungen' and the 'Gudrun' are relics from the wreck of heathen life, which had been handed down through the medium of popular tradition. But the poetry of the Minnesingers is indigenous to Catholic soil; with its strange blending of the religious and the military spirit it presents an admirable type of life in the Middle Ages. Here, then, as we might expect, we find the clearest manifestations of that love for nature which is so rarely exhibited in the more primitive 'Niebulungen.' " *

§ 7. The growing love for nature fostered by the Church is seen also in the architecture and art of the Middle Ages.

* "Secret of Christianity," pp. 136-7.

The comparison of a Gothic cathedral with a Greek temple will convince the observer that in the one case you have a stone embodiment of nature, while in the other you have the mathematical precision of human invention. The rise of landscape painting tells the same tale; and the culmination, so to speak, of the tendency appears in feudalism where a man's relation to a bit of land determines his position in society.*

§ 8. The more this love for nature is studied, the more easily it will be seen to be an element European progress owes to the Catholic Church. Of course a superficial thinker like Draper may declaim against all indebtedness to the Church of the Middle Ages in all moods and tenses; but a deeper insight will lead us to admit that the love for nature which the scientific spirit requires was providentially conveyed and fostered by the Middle Age Church.†

§ 9. And along with this love for nature there came the conviction that harmony, symmetry, and unity pervaded it, if we could only reach it. Nature came to be regarded, to use the expression of Plotinus, as "the sleeping Logos." The secrets of nature were eminently worth inquiring after and extracting. Doubtless such men as the alchemists did but little for the advancement of science as such; yet their spirit was good, for nature had become their oracle. And then as we advance we find that the conviction steadily grows that nature is rational throughout its bounds, and is the embodiment in *fact* of what is logically deducible from *law*. In the substantiation of this scientific position the prayerful men, such as Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, and

* "Secret of Christianity," pp. 139-42.

† Interesting pictures of the influence of Christianity will be found in Kahn's last work, "Der Gang der Kirche"; his treatment of the "Mittelalterliche Kirche" is very suggestive.

Faraday, have done as much at least as any of their prayerless mates ; and it may be most justly argued that but for the Christian influences of the earlier as well as Reformation times the scientific spirit would not be what it is. The prayerful system, which has ever insisted on nature being an exposition of the thoughts of God, and which has in all ages given to science some of her ablest sons, cannot forego her claim to a considerable share in the development of the scientific spirit.*

§ 10. We admit that sometimes the Church has sinned against her own interests as well as against science in contending for *interpretations* of Scripture as if the interpretations must be infallible ; and for these sins she has received severe chastisement in the alienation of minds she might by wiser policies have won. But at the same time we cannot but maintain that the scientific spirit and the science of to-day would not be the glorious heritage they are, but for a goodly band of prayerful predecessors, who ventured to commune with nature's God and studied nature amid the hallowed association. We maintain, in a word, that the scientific spirit is in appreciable measure a prayer-product too.

§ 11. We have thus endeavoured not only to show how reasonable the theory of efficacious prayer is on those analogical grounds to which we are committed, but also to point out the verification which efficacious prayer has had and still has in the constitution of Holy Scripture, in the facts of our Lord's life, of the progress of Christianity, civilization, and the scientific spirit. We might with ampler limits and more abundant leisure have done

* M. Naville has, in his "Le Père Céleste," presented the religious men of science in contrast with the irreligious, with his usual power and piquancy.

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more justice to the important theme than our present opportunities have allowed us to achieve; but we have, we trust, succeeded in demonstrating that for our practice of prayer we have good ground in the nature and analogy of things.

PART V.

Epilogue.

EPILOGUE.

§ 1. **I**T only remains for us to sum up our argument and apply it. Perhaps it can best be done in this way. If we had lived in Palestine in the time of Jesus Christ, and had prosecuted such an inquiry as the present one about the efficacy of prayer, we should have found a considerable section of the people prepared to maintain that God did not hear prayer and answer it as in the days of yore. To adopt the language of the prophet, these people imagined that the Lord's hand was shortened, so that it could not save, and His ear had grown heavy, so that it could not hear (Isa. lix. 1). Their notion was that God in their day made *no* sign. Of course a series of unprecedented works were being wrought by Jesus Christ in a spirit of profound philanthropy. But the Scribes and Pharisees had a theory which, they believed, accounted for the phenomena; the wonders were all performed through the inspiration of Beelzebub, and had no connection, they felt certain, with God in heaven. However unreasonable this may seem to us, their position is perfectly intelligible. They *assumed* that they were themselves the best and wisest people of their day. They congratulated themselves even before God that they were not as other men are. They consequently concluded that if any were heard and answered by God it must be themselves. But, strange to say, they had been praying and plotting for political emancipation for generations;

they had been wrestling earnestly for deliverance from the Roman power, but the emancipation had never come; and this Jesus, who ought, they imagined, to have turned out a political Deliverer, had taken up the rôle of a Saviour from sin, of which these Pharisees fancied they were *not*, in any great degree, guilty. In other words, because they, the best of men, had not got deliverance from Roman bondage in answer to their prayers, therefore God's ear had become heavy, and He could not hear.

§ 2. The prayers of others, as we have seen, were being answered. In particular, the prayers of the incomparable Philanthropist who moved among them were being answered daily. But what did the philanthropies of a Nazarene amount to, when compared with the emancipation of their country from Roman bondage? As long as God ignored the cry of the patriots, and gave no political relief, men, who imagined they needed no deeper deliverance, pronounced against the present efficacy of prayer. But no one imagines that their conclusion was a fair deduction from the facts. God might be the Answerer of proper prayer, while He gave no heed to the prayers of proud patriots for political relief. *The inefficacy of the prayer of pride may be perfectly compatible with the efficacy of the prayer of the humble.*

§ 3. And, in fact, this is the position taken up by the prophet in the passage already referred to, and which the best expositors believe applies to the times before and during the life of Christ. "Behold," says the prophet, "the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. lix. 1, 2). That is to say, sin is a separating

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power ; it isolates men from God, so that He judicially denies answers to sin-prompted prayers. It will be found instructive to inquire into the character of these Pharisees who in Christ's time were denied answers to their prayers. We admit at once that they were moral men, in the ordinary sense of that term. They lived pure lives ; they kept the rites and ceremonies of their Church with scrupulous care ; they enjoyed a great religious reputation ; they were patriotic, too. In the wars of the Maccabees, and in every subsequent revolt against the oppressor, it was the Pharisaic party who supplied the rank and file of the revolution. To the outward eye they were excellent, religious men. But it was on this account most easy for them to fall into the sin of self-satisfaction and self-righteousness. Because they were so respectable, they thanked God they were not as other men are, and supposed that such very respectable people could not but be accepted of Him. When, therefore, they came into His presence, it was to state their personal superiority to others, and to ask that it should be acknowledged in their deliverance from Rome. They desired political emancipation for their country, that they might become what they believed they deserved to be—masters of the world ! They believed that Cæsar deserved no such empire as he ruled over, but that they, as Pharisees, were the born leaders of mankind. Hence the cry of the patriots was *selfish*, and *not philanthropic*. It was simply that the tyranny of Rome should be exchanged for the tyranny of Pharisaism.

§ 4. Could God, upon any fixed moral principles, respond to such an *ambitious* prayer ? Is a moral Governor to be expected to hearken to the cry of ambitious and self-centred souls ? Is He not within His rights, and well within the bounds of true wisdom, when He ignores such petitions, and

keeps such petitioners at a distance? We respect and adore the mighty Being who professes to act upon the principle of "knowing the proud afar off" (Psalm cxxxviii. 6); while, on the other hand, He hath respect unto the lowly; yea, is prepared to dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. lvii. 15). This, we must admit, is moral government of the purest character. Pride, self-satisfaction, self-confidence, self-assertion, selfish ambition—these are all *sins* which separate souls from God, and vitiate every prayer they prompt and inspire. The prayer of the Pharisaic party for political deliverance, therefore, deserved no answer. It was not the cry of philanthropic souls, but of those who despised others, and, when they could, brought them into bondage. The tyranny of Cæsar was not so severe as the tyranny of the Pharisees would have been, had God given them their desire, and made them masters of the world. *Sin-prompted prayer deserves no answer.*

§ 5. But there was another party in Christ's time who believed in the efficacy of prayer. At their head stood Jesus Himself. They were not self-centred, they were not self-satisfied. They realized that they could not be satisfied without God. They cried out for God, for the living God. And they found Him. He was not far from any one of them. The lowly hearts did not require to ascend into heaven, nor to descend into the earth, to find Him; but they found Him nigh, His word was in their mouths and in their hearts; they ceased to be strangers in nature, because they had learned to be at home with God. We do not affirm that the meek and lowly souls, who followed Him who was the meekest and the lowliest of them all, understood nature's laws as scientific men under-

stand them now; but they were “at home” in nature. Jesus taught them that every sunrise was a token of the love of Him who thus appealed to the evil as well as to the good; and that the former and the latter rain, which watered benignly the lands of the unjust as well as of the just, was meant to speak of Him who loved His enemies as well as His friends, and by His love would transfigure them. (Matt. v. 43-48.) Jesus taught them that nature is a parable of spiritual things, and, as its very name implies, is intended to give birth to thoughts about something better than itself.* In His parables Jesus gives us not *analogies of the fancy*, such as any poet can give to us, but *analogies of the judgment*; that is, analogies founded upon the very nature of things, and interpreting for us the meaning and the mystery of the world. In this way He taught His disciples to be “at home” in nature, and to accept of it as a message from the heart of a loving God, a Father in heaven.

§ 6. He also taught them how to regard their fellow-men. The proud Pharisee would tyrannise over his fellows. He did tyrannise in his treatment of “publican and sinner.” But the followers of Jesus were to aim at the unity of mankind. They were to conquer their fellow-men by love, and to unite all men under the one Father in heaven. The substance of Christ’s teaching was the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, or, in poetic words, that

“God hath made
Mankind to be one mighty family,
Himself our Father, and the world our home.”

However the followers of Jesus may have failed to take in fully the *unifying* purpose of the Christian system, this was

* “Nature,” from *natura*, “something about to be born.”

its essence—the reduction of mankind to a moral unity by the power of love. Hence the organic connection of mankind, and the necessity of never allowing selfishness to break the unity of the spirit or the bond of peace. In other words, Jesus made His followers children of God, and in the maintenance of the child's spirit there lay the secret of the Father's will, which is love. Hence He taught them that the revelation of the Father's will was not for the wise and the prudent, but for the babes; only the childlike can appreciate the purposes of the Father in their unifying sweep and magnificent simplicity of love. (Matt. xi. 25.)

§ 7. Now we have transported ourselves imaginatively into the distant past, that we may with less heat appreciate our own attitude to this question of the efficacy of prayer. The two parties in our Lord's time have their counterparts to-day. One party denies the efficacy of prayer, another party maintains it. Both may be simply stating their own experience. The one party believe their prayers have been answered; the other party have had, they believe, no answers. The question to be determined is, *Which is in the proper moral attitude?* We know how delicate a matter it is to touch upon. But truth demands that we should not shirk it. The custom has been in dealing with objectors to give them credit for all the virtues under heaven. But we are compelled in such a discussion as the present to look more narrowly into moral distinctions, and to press home the consideration of the inquirer's moral attitude. We look into the writings of those who object to the efficacy of prayer, and we have no difficulty in finding therein the same moral qualities which characterized the Pharisaic party. There is a self-confidence which no Pharisee could surpass; there is a contempt for others

which affects no disguise; there is a limitation to their philanthropy which they cannot conceal. They do not attack the question in a spirit of *self-abasement*; they will not make the prayer-experiment as they conduct their experiments in other directions; because they do not get the answers they think they ought, they hastily condemn the whole practice. Whereas if they would only give prayer an honest trial, they would have such an experimental demonstration of its efficacy as would effectually put all their doubt to rest.

§ 8. Perhaps a quotation or two will more adequately convey the idea. Speaking of the "sincerity" which should characterise us in our relations to God, the late Professor T. H. Green says: "By 'sincerity' (*εὐλικρίνεια*) here [*i.e.*, in 1 Cor. v. 7, 8] is to be understood, I think, perfect openness towards God; that clearness of the soul in which nothing interferes with its penetration by the Divine sunlight. Given this openness on our part, Christ, the revealed God, will gradually find His way into our souls, not in word but in power. We must be clear from vice, clear from self-indulgence, clear from self-conceit. How imperfectly do we attain this clearness, yet how can we wonder, till we attain it, that we lack the witness of God? . . . It is STILL OUR SINS, AND NOTHING ELSE, THAT SEPARATE US FROM GOD. Philosophy and science, to those who seek not to talk of them but to know their power, do but render His clearness more clear, and the freedom of His service a more perfect freedom. His witness grows with time. In great books and great examples, in the gathering fulness of spiritual utterance which we trace through the history of literature, in the self-denying love which we have known from the cradle, in the moralising influences of civil life, in the closer fellowship of the Christian society, in the

sacramental ordinances which represent that fellowship, in common worship, in the message of the preachers through which, amid diversity of stammering tongues, one spirit still speaks—here God's sunshine is shed abroad without us. If it does not reach within the heart, it is because the heart has a darkness of its own, some unconquered selfishness which prevents its relation to Him being one of 'sincerity and truth.'* *

§ 9. Another quotation from the same quarter will perhaps be welcome. He says to the Oxford students: "We are in the highway and mid-current of spiritual progress. Yet are we not ourselves standing still, or moving in a trivial round of intellectual luxuries? Is not our heart shut against the voice that calls us out of ourselves, and busy with the idol of its own self-decoration? How much of our real interest is going to the quest after truth and God,—how much to the attainment of skill in writing clever articles and saying 'good things,' which have no result but to make our brethren offend, and to surround ourselves with an atmosphere of irreverence and unreality over which God's Spirit broods in vain? He that seeketh findeth what he seeks; and if in reading and thinking we look merely for a testimony to our own cleverness, we shall find probably what we seek, but no higher witness. We know that egotism has to be outwardly suppressed if ordinary good fellowship is to be possible. Much more must it be mortified and raised again to an altered life if we would attain the fellowship of the Son, and with it the spirit of adoption and the truth which makes us free."†

* "The Witness of God and Faith," two Lay Sermons by the late T. H. Green, M.A., LL.D., Fellow of Balliol College, and Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Oxford, pp. 41-3.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

§ 10. It will thus appear that there is such a thing as intellectual self-indulgence, and that this is just as *blinding* in its effect as any other form of self-indulgence. The "wise and prudent" cannot see the Father even in the face of Jesus Christ, much less in the face of Nature, and so miss the fellowship which childlike hearts enjoy. With them everything has "faded into the light of common day," and nothing comes "apparelled in celestial light." Their verdict will be against the efficacy of prayer so long as this intellectual pride and self-sufficiency continue. But let them only drop the intellectual conceit, and lo! all nature, all history, all personal experience, will become instinct with God. Celestial splendour will once more light up life's landscape, and they will find themselves "at home" with God. The humiliation of the spirit creates such a sense of God that nature and history and all experience become transfigured. The "pure heart" is the whole secret. If the inquirer has brought a heart to the inquiry with all its capacity for love, if he has allowed his heart to be purged from all the dross of self-conceit and self-sufficiency, he will have no difficulty in seeing, and in holding fellowship with, God.

§ 11. "Nature," says a French writer, "does not hold the same language for all. The language is, for the most part, only the echo of the word which we hear in the depth of our own being. We see nature across our personal impressions—we lend to it the sentiments which animate ourselves. Entertain in presence of nature sentiments pure and delicate, and nature will say to you, 'I am divine, I am the child of God, listen to the song of love which I make to mount to Him.' Have, on the contrary, your soul filled with lusts (*convoitises*) and evil passions, and nature will no longer hold the same language for

you; she will be dangerous in your estimation, she will give increased intensity to the evil which is in you. The pleasures she affords us are of the most elevated character, or they are inferior and sensual, just according as our heart is attached to things above or to things below. Nature does not leave us indifferent; she is beautiful! She is filled with so many harmonies. Under her aspects, whether severe or gracious, she moves so profoundly our soul. But—I repeat it—the spectacle of her beauties is corrupting or beneficent; it raises us or abases us, according to the dispositions in which we find ourselves when we contemplate it. Who of us has not had more than once the experience? Recall the hours of solitude and of meditation which you have passed in presence of nature, and tell me if these hours have not been sweet and blessed just in proportion as your heart has been well disposed? When has nature unveiled her most intimate secrets to you? When has she spoken to you of the presence and of the bounty of a Father in heaven? When has she consoled and strengthened you? Has it been when your heart was filled with sickly (*malsaines*) thoughts, or troubled with evil desires? No, no! but when it was pure. The soul ravaged by sensuality, by hatred, or by base ambitions, does not hear the voice of God in nature: this voice is stifled (*converte*) by passion. The temple is still there, but the God who inhabits it reveals there no longer His presence; the heavens are still there with their brilliant array (*armée*), but they do not recount any longer the glory of the mighty God, and the expanse no longer affords a knowledge of the work of His hands; all the graces, all the splendours, all the lovely and magnificent (*grandioses*) harmonies of nature are there, but the unseen harps no longer produce an anthem of love and of adoration. There must be the calm, the calm

of a pure heart, to understand nature. 'The soul agitated by passion sustains itself in solitude by devouring itself. But the more one struggles after personal purification, the more one has cultivated in his soul moral beauty, the more also is nature rich, profound, divinely eloquent for him who comes to seek from her consolation or calm' (*Vinet*)."*

§ 12. In such a case it will be easily understood how communion with God is sustained. Nature is seen to be a Father's house, and in all her moods she speaks of God. Doubtless much of her meaning lies beyond the reach of the pure hearts, in the dim, mysterious region into which all, sooner or later, are compelled to come. But we are "at home" in nature the moment we have felt it to be a Father's revelation. We love it for His sake. Its laws are believed to be the dictates of profoundest love. They come to us with the associations of "the Holy of holies." Science becomes the handmaid of holiness, and helps us to worthier worship. Perplexities summon us to faith, and we leave our unsolved problems at the feet of God.

§ 13. The entertainment of such a view of nature can interfere with the pursuit of no science properly so called. So far from this, it secures that very *love for nature* which we have already seen to be an essential element of the scientific spirit. We enter in such a case *prayerfully* into the study of nature; we expect communion with its Maker through it; every new law discovered by mankind becomes a fresh revelation of the Divine wisdom, and is prized as a Divine thought; and under the hallowed associations the inspiration needful for the interpretation of nature is much more likely to be received. So far, therefore, from the prayerful attitude of pure hearts being in any way antagonistic to the mastery of nature, it is, when properly

* Cf. Decoppet's Sermon on "Les Cœurs Purs," "Sermons," pp. 282-5

considered, helpful altogether. Every new law becomes an answer to the longing of our hearts, that we may the more fully understand God.

§ 14. Besides, such a view of nature of necessity controls our expectations about answers to prayer. If the order of nature be accepted as a revelation of the mind of God, if science be prized as an exposition of, at least, "a part of His ways," then we will not set our hearts on MIRACLE as an answer to our prayers, but we will *prefer* the answer which comes through recognized law. We will value that freedom from intellectual confusion which we believe the Almighty now secures for men, and we will set our hearts upon no break of the continuity, seeing we believe in His power to meet our needs through manipulation of the existing order. We can see a propriety in the restriction of the miraculous to the ages when no intellectual confusion could be produced by it, since the idea of order had not yet impressed itself so powerfully on the mind of the race; while in the ages of scientific progress the Almighty can show His power in meeting His people's needs without any interruption of the universal order. But in such a case the arrangement is not meant to isolate men from God, but to increase our confidence in Him, and to widen the sphere of our fellowship. The order of nature should be an incentive to prayer instead of a hindrance.* The Divine possibilities, as we have already seen, are practically unlimited in manipulating the laws He has ordained.

§ 15. When, moreover, it is remembered that selfish, sin-prompted prayers deserve no answer, we perceive that prayer to be efficacious should be on the line of God's unselfish purposes. When we ask for "daily bread" in accordance with the direction of "the Lord's Prayer," it is

* Cf. "Expositor," vol. vi., pp. 36-50.

not with a view to self-indulgence, but in order to the efficient discharge of our duties as children of Him we have been taught to call "our Father which art in heaven." In such a case we may well believe that the laws of nature, which in His Fatherly wisdom He has ordained, will be so manipulated in His gracious providence that we shall be fed and thereby fitted for our work. We ask no miracle of provision, but are content to gather what He gives in the way He has ordained, and to be grateful to Him for it all. But temporal blessings, if asked for from selfish motives, to minister to ambition or indulgence, cannot be regarded by the suppliant as within the circle of the Divine promises. Instead of taking up any such position, therefore, as that prayer for temporal mercies is profitless, we simply limit the range of the temporal blessing, and regard God as pledged only to supply our need that we may gratefully serve Him.

§ 16. In matters spiritual there is no practical limit to attainment through prayer. It should be remembered that promises are frequently misapplied. For example, the promise, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it," is often misapplied, as if it meant the utmost *license of desire*. But the context shows that it refers to philanthropic work. The believers in Jesus will be enabled not only to work such miracles of mercy as had characterised the Master, but also to do even greater works. These, it is admitted, mean the *spiritual* miracles which were performed at Pentecost, and which have had a distinct succession ever since. The regeneration of a soul is a greater work than the renewal of a body; and so in the line of philanthropic effort, in seeking the salvation and the unity of mankind

the disciples would be enabled by the Master to do marvellous and mighty things. Let them ask what they will in this direction, and He will do it for them. The promise is thus seen to be the property of *philanthropists*. There can be no limit to the desire of disinterested philanthropy. If men are only in downright earnest in benefiting their fellows, if they are ready for any self-denial and any sacrifice which the public weal requires, then they may come to the throne of grace and ask without stint from a loving Lord.

§ 17. The purpose of the Father in heaven who overshadows all is the creation of the Christian brotherhood. His laws of nature and of grace favour the magnificent design. In our prayers we fall in with the programme of love, and find that all things are co-operating towards this worthy end. The dispensations of sickness, or of sorrow, or of adversity, are all found to work together for good to those who have learned to love God. It thus appears that we may pass by resignation of spirit into an *optimism*, which contrasts most powerfully with the *pessimism* of self-sufficient philosophy. The moment the soul is enabled to discern at the back of things a God who is Love, the entire system seems transfigured. "All things" are then found in some way to work together for good to those who love God; the world, as constituted at present, is felt to be the very best world which, in our imperfect development, we could possess; the system is temporary, but no better temporary system could be devised for the development of character.

§ 18. It is better that we should have our debates about the efficacy of prayer, than that it should be so evident as to admit of no question. If it were the matter of sensible demonstration, such as some doubtless demand, religion

would become a matter of sense-perception and of sight, instead of a matter of trust. The whole tone of Christian life and feeling would deteriorate. As already shown, the selfish spirit would supplant disinterested devotion, and the "armies of the faith" would degenerate into mercenary mobs. It is better far, that we should have to reason out calmly the question of prayer, and draw our conclusion in the light of the evidence, than that we should have no discussion at all. The evidence, as we have tried to show, is sufficient to establish the conclusion that the propriety of prayer is according to the analogy of nature and the constitution of things. But it is *not* sufficient, and no possible evidence is sufficient, to *force* the conclusion upon unwilling minds.

§ 19. "Whence comes it," says a writer already quoted, "that so many educated and intelligent men do not recognize in Christianity a Divine doctrine, and consequently an authority? Some, without doubt, can be arrested by the difficulties which faith presents to reason; but the most part are not convinced because they do not wish to be, and because they do not examine even seriously the proofs of Christianity; or because they arrest themselves not on the ground of what will persuade them, but upon the ground of what appears to them unacceptable. Faith is essentially a moral fact, a determination of the conscience, an *élan* of the heart. If it was not so, it would not be commanded as a duty, and Scripture would not declare to us that unbelief comes from hardness of heart. Truths of the moral and religious order are not to us matters of indifference; they bind us, they lay us under obligation, they are intended (*veulent*) to rule our life. To accept them, we must consent to be governed by them; without this preliminary consent, which a pure heart alone can give, one seeks all possible

reasons for rejecting them, and fails not in finding them. A carnal heart has every interest in making out the Bible to be only a tissue of fables or of legends, and Jesus Christ a poor sinner like you and me. Ideas depend more than we think upon inclinations, desires, and, in general, upon the moral state of the man. 'Intellect is venal; it furnishes pretexts for all the lusts of the heart' (*Luthardt*). If nobody doubts mathematical truths, it is because nobody has any interest in doubting them. A daring philosopher of last century, Fichte, has even made this avowal: 'Our systems are, indeed, often but the history of our heart. All my convictions,' he adds, 'are determined by my character, and not by my reason. It is by bettering (*améliorant*) one's heart that he arrives most surely at the true wisdom.'"*

§ 20. We have no hesitation, therefore, in asserting that if inquirers will only bring to the investigation lowly minds and hearts, sufficient has been adduced in the present treatise to warrant an affirmative response to the question, "Does God answer prayer?" Let the experiment be only impartially made, let the precaution be taken of analysing faithfully the motive of our prayers, and we shall soon reach the conclusion that God, though He rejects and keeps at a distance the proud, giveth grace unto the humble. We offer in the Appendix some account of what has been already written on the subject,† and, in the belief that we have pointed out faithfully the true line of philosophical defence, we ask our readers to verify the argument for themselves.

* Decoppet, *ut supra*, pp. 280-1.

† Appendix. Note S.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Note A (p. 13).

THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.

WE have noticed in the text the fact that professed agnostics cannot enter impartially upon the investigation of prayer. They are already prejudiced against its efficacy. This must colour all their inquiry. And it may not be amiss here to formulate the fact, that so far from the Christian inquirer being prejudiced, he, above all others, must be impartial. For it is not indifference which secures impartiality. So far from this, it may be easily shown that indifference incapacitates its possessor from judicial investigation. It is only when the ascertainment of truth is a matter of life and of death with us that we find ourselves unable to overlook any consideration bearing upon our subject. The Christian faith is a matter of life and of death with all believers; we cannot, consequently, afford to ignore any objection against it. And it will be found, as a matter of experience, that Christian inquirers go more impartially into the discussion of vital questions than their opponents. As Scripture says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"; and freedom from prejudice and partiality is one of the gifts of the Spirit. The following quotations confirmatory of this contention will be welcome:—

"Whatever else you may say of it, modern orthodoxy is no coward! It has become used to the edge of the precipice, it has looked down into the depths, its ear is haunted with the sound of the cataracts! It will look the facts in the face—the fact of sin, the fact of Divine law, the fact of condemnation and death. But orthodoxy does also what no science can do

it takes these facts and holds them up before its clear, shining faith, that God is love. It takes these facts, awful though they are, and brings them to Jesus, and leaves them at the foot of the cross. Orthodoxy sees the chasms, and the precipices, and the wild cataracts; but it sees also, shed abroad over all, the light of the love of God; it would behold them no more under any cloud of its own foolish imaginations, or heavy, overshadowing traditions; it would see them in the sunlight of the Gospel, in the joy of its faith in the perfect goodness of the perfect God. And so, reserving many questions, as Erasmus once said they should be reserved, not until the next general council, but until that hour when we shall stand face to face with God, our theology has patience, and can wait. Having rested as a child upon the bosom of the infinite Fatherhood of God, our faith is content if it can feel close to its own trembling heart the beatings of that heart which is ever true and unchangeable in its goodness, even though it may be darkness and night round about it as it lies upon the bosom of God.”—Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth, in his “Orthodox Theology of To-Day.”

“Now, there is one remark to be made at the outset which seems to deserve particular consideration. It is that, among those who have conducted this great controversy, Christian writers alone have approached the subject from an impartial point of view. A different impression no doubt prevails, and it is a common reproach against us that we enter on the discussion with a special interest in favour of the old faith. Of course we do; and it would be a shame to us if we did not. We have the same interest in believing in the truth of the Christian creed that all men have for believing in the truth of any cause with which the civilization they inherit is indissolubly bound up, for which those whom they love and admire best in the world have shed their blood, and with which the deepest and purest and most elevating of their feelings are united. It would be a bitter thing, no doubt, and bitter to others than Christians,—it would be a shock to human nature, and would shake our faith in the very trustworthiness of our faculties,—to have to recognize that the self-sacrifice of Christian martyrs

and the devoted lives of Christian saints, inseparably united as they are, in a manner presented by no other religion, with all that is noblest and most progressive in history, with the highest hopes of the human race even for this world; to have to recognize, I say, that all this was founded upon a series of illusions. But, nevertheless, none have the right to say of us, any more than they have a right to presume respecting any other men, that we are disqualified by our prejudices from recognizing plain facts. It is facts that we want, and nothing else. Our creed, as has already been said, is a creed of facts; and every light that can be thrown on the evidence for them is welcome to us. On the other hand, we are justified in saying of the principal writers among our antagonists—for they say it of themselves—that they are so far from entering on the consideration of the subject impartially, that they actually prejudge the very question in dispute. They say, and it is the cardinal and ever-recurring principle of their objections, that miracles and supernatural facts cannot have happened; and that this consideration, taken alone, renders it necessary to treat the narratives of the Gospels as legendary. As illustrations of this attitude of mind, it may be sufficient to mention three leading writers: Strauss, the notorious author of the mythical theory of the Gospels; Baur, the distinguished leader of the Tübingen school; and, lastly, M. Renan. Strauss, in his final work on this subject, reiterated that the main difficulty in accepting the narratives of the Gospels as historical is that they assume the existence of a personality in our Lord, and recognize the operation of powers in the course of His life, to which we have no parallel in any other history.* Of course we have not, that is the very Christian contention; but to assume that because no such personality and no such deeds are recorded in any other history, therefore they could not have occurred in the case of our Lord, is to beg the whole question at issue; it is to say that no amount of evidence to the narratives of the Gospels would be of any value. Or, as Strauss puts it in another form, ‘that which cannot happen

* “Das Leben Jesu für das Deutsche Volk bearbeitet.” Third Edition, 1876, s. 145.

did not happen';* and accordingly the narratives of the Gospels must be explained away by some device or other. The case is practically the same with Baur; while sympathizing with Strauss, he objected to him that he had not sufficiently investigated the authenticity and date of the Gospels. Strauss laid the stress of the argument on the inherent incredibility of the history; Baur, on the other hand, endeavoured to show that the Gospels were of very late origin, and consequently could not be regarded as valid testimony to the occurrence of the facts. But, after all, the decisive argument, even for him, is that the contents of the Gospels are miraculous and impossible. In his own words, 'The cardinal argument for the later origin of our Gospels remains always this: that each of them for itself, and still more all of them together, relate so much in the life of Jesus in a manner in which in reality it is impossible for it to have happened.'† In other words, Baur, a man of immense learning and originality, starts on this momentous inquiry with the prejudgment that the narratives of the Gospel are impossible; and naturally he is at no loss to invent theories—most of which, however, have since been surrendered by his successors—as to their composition. Lastly, as to M. Renan, it is only necessary to quote one sentence from the preface to the thirteenth edition of his 'Life of Jesus,' in which his work assumed its final form. 'At the foundation,' he says, 'of every discussion of similar matters lies the question of the supernatural. If miracles and the inspiration of certain books are a reality, my method is detestable. If, on the other hand, miracles and the inspiration of books are beliefs destitute of reality, my method is a good one. But the question of the supernatural is decided for us with a complete certainty by this single reason: that there is no room for believing in a thing of which the world does not offer any experimental trace.' Accordingly he, too, is obliged to invent a theory of his own to account for the narratives of the Gospels,

* See also "Das Leben Jesu kaitisch bearbeitet." Fourth Edition, § 16; *Criteria of what is unhistorical in the evangelical narrative.*

† "Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien," 1847, s. 530.

on the supposition of their being legendary. Neither of these well-known writers, in other words, approaches the subject with an open mind. The main question—the question of the trustworthiness of the authors of the Gospels—is settled in advance, not by reference to testimony or criticism, but by an *à priori* supposition; they combine in saying, with Strauss, ‘These things cannot have happened, therefore they did not happen.’ The Christian writer, on the other hand, says, ‘I am not prepared to say beforehand what may or may not have happened; what is possible, and what is impossible. I want simply to know what did happen; and I am prepared to accept good evidence on the subject, however surprising the events to which it bears testimony.’ In view of these facts, which are proclaimed in the very face of all the chief negative arguments on this subject, are we not justified in saying that the impartiality is on our side, the prejudice and the assumptions on the other? Of course, if we could be sure that a miracle was inconceivable, the method of rationalistic writers would, as M. Renan says, be justified. But whilst it can be said, in the words of Professor Huxley in his book on Hume, that ‘No event is too extraordinary to be possible; and therefore, if by the term miracle we mean only extremely wonderful events, there can be no just grounds for denying the possibility of their occurrence,’* no such assumption will be accepted by thoughtful men. We are not accustomed to decide these matters upon abstract theories of possibilities and impossibilities. We want simply to know what is the evidence on the subject; and that has been, and is still, the attitude of all English theologians of distinction.”—Rev. Dr. Wace, in his last work, “The Gospel and its Witnesses,” pp. 9-14.

Note B (p. 44).

THE CHARGE OF ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

“There seems, in fact, to lurk an extraordinary sophism in the offence which is taken at so-called anthropomorphism. Men

* Page 134.

observe the operation of the inanimate forces of nature, and deduce from them the methods of God's operation. There, they will say, you observe the course of His action; and you notice its absolute regularity, and the absence of any indication that we can detect of its disturbance by personal action and will. But the moment the moralist, or the theologian, points to another sphere of nature,—that of human nature, which is nature still,—and argues from it in a similar manner, regarding it as a revelation of part, at all events, of God's method of action, we are denounced as anthropomorphic. Be it so. But what is the scientific conception but—if I may be allowed to coin the word—physico-morphism? They see the likeness and reflection of God in nature; we see the image and reflection of God in man; and why not the one as well as the other? The corruption of our moral nature creates, indeed, a gulf between us and Him. But considered from the point of view of a physical philosopher, man is not only a part of nature, but the highest and most completely developed part. By all means let us learn all that natural philosophers can tell us of the Divine nature and methods and power from the inanimate and irrational creation; but let them not refuse to take into account what we can tell them, or rather what their own hearts can tell them, respecting God's nature, His power, and the method of His action, as exhibited in the mind and will of man. You discern in nature an order which, in some sense, is immutable; and if you admit a Divine mind at all, you attribute a similar order, and a similar immutability, to that mind. Then let us argue in the same way from our own nature; and if we see the very noblest expressions of human nature in our love, our hatred, our wrath, our mercy, our repentance, our forgiveness, let us acknowledge, on the same principle, that these also are a reflex, however faint, of Divine perfections, and let us not shrink from recognizing, in the language of the Scriptures, that the Creator of those emotions loves and hates, and is wrathful and merciful, and repents and forgives. And if we hold in our hands a vast complexity of agencies, human, animal, physical, chemical, which come as we bid them come, and go as we bid them go, in accordance, not with any immutable order of external nature, but in

obedience to our intellectual designs and moral intentions, to fulfil our love or our enmity, our justice or our mercy, with what reason can we doubt that He, too,—but with a completeness, an invisibleness, a continuousness, a supremacy, of which we have no conception,—is controlling every physical element, and every circumstance which surrounds us? Argue from nature, exclusive of man, and you may acquiesce in the hard mechanical views which alone it suggests to you. Argue from nature with man, and man's actions, and man's will, included within it, and you will agree with Luther that the centurion (Matt. viii. 5-10) was a great Doctor of Divinity."—Rev. Dr. Wace, *ut supra*, pp. 103-105.

Note C (p. 53).

THE FIVE SENSES OF "LAW" ACCORDING TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

"There are at least five senses in which Law is habitually used, and these must be carefully distinguished:—

"First, We have Law as applied simply to an observed order of facts.

"Secondly, To that order as involving the action of some force or forces, of which nothing may be known.

"Thirdly, As applied to individual forces the measure of whose operation has been more or less defined or ascertained.

"Fourthly, As applied to those combinations of force which have reference to the fulfilment of purpose, or the discharge of function.

"Fifthly, As applied to the abstract conceptions of the mind—not corresponding with any actual phenomena, but deduced therefrom as axioms of thought necessary to our understanding of them. Law, in this sense, is a reduction of the phenomena, not merely to an order of facts, but to an order of thought. These great leading significations of the word Law all circle round the three great questions which science asks of nature, the what, the how, and the why:—

"(1) What are the facts in their established order?

“(2) How—that is, from what physical causes—does that order come to be?

“(3) Why have these causes been so combined? What relation do they bear to purpose, to the fulfilment of intention, to the discharge of function?”—Duke of Argyll’s “Reign of Law,” p. 64, etc.

Note D (p. 74).

FREE-WILL.

“Any objections against the daily moral interposition of a Divine will in the course of nature, on the ground of the immutability of physical laws and of their action, is equally, as is now candidly confessed, an argument against the independent personal action of a human will. Man’s body, in all its functions, is a part of the whole sum of nature. It enters the sphere in which all the laws of physical nature work. It is subject to the law of the conservation of force, and to every other physical consideration by which personal Divine will is supposed to be excluded. And yet, in spite of this, and side by side with it, we are all acting on each other by moral forces; our physical actions are prompted by moral motives, by intellectual designs, by determinations of will. But this, it is sometimes replied, is an illusion. You seem to have a free will: but you have not; you are a link in the chain of causation, and your apparent morality is a physical product. For the purposes of such an argument as the present this is a mere dispute about words. Let your will, your love, your intellect be what you please. All the theologian is concerned to maintain is that the Divine will, the Divine love, the Divine wisdom can act, and does act, in a similar manner; and that if we say to one subordinate agent, from moral motives, and for moral purposes, Go, and it goeth, and to another, Come, and it cometh, and to our servants, Do this, and they do it, our Creator, the source and eternal strength of all these powers, is perpetually employing in a similar manner, and for similar motives,—albeit with an exaltation of their character

far beyond our conceptions,—the innumerable agencies which are under His command.”—Rev. Dr. Wace, *ut supra*, pp. 105-6.

Note E (p. 105).

PHYSICAL CAUSES COMPATIBLE WITH CHAOS JUST AS
WELL AS WITH A COSMOS.

The scientific men, who fancy that physical causes are altogether sufficient to account for the cosmos, have overlooked the fact that such causes are in themselves just as compatible with phenomenal chaos as with the arrangement and order which happily prevail. Consequently something beyond the physical and mechanical is required to account for the result. The following quotation is suggestive:—

“I would remark with great respect, and knowing that the liability is shared by other departments of knowledge as well, that physical science is capable—if I may dare to say such a thing—of breeding crotchets. A curious attitude of opposition to common sense is, I say, noticeable as an occasional feature of the scientific mind, rising up at sudden turns. It is a phenomenon to be attended to. We speak of poetry, romance, religious enthusiasm generating strange fancies; but nothing can exceed the odd and unaccountable convictions which science sometimes takes up. Can there, for instance, be found a more curious quarrel with common sense than that antipathy which some scientific schools, especially the French school, entertain to the idea of design in nature, so thrust upon us by nature? The vindication of physical causes can hardly be considered as more than a decent disguise for this grotesque prejudice of science; because it is so obvious that physical causes can produce a chaos just as much as they can produce a harmony or system; that they are common to arrangement and disorder, and therefore cannot in themselves account for arrangement.”—The late Canon Mozley in his “Lectures and other Theological Papers,” pp. 22-3.

Note F (p. 122).

DIALOGUE, AND NOT SOLILOQUY, IS PRAYER.

“Prayer is, in its highest form, literally the ‘communion’ of the Divine and human spirit; and for communion to exist, it must needs be that two concomitant wills be exerted—the will of him who speaks, and that of him who listens, of him who asks, and him who grants; and again, in converse shape, of him who inspires, and him who reflects inspiration, him who bestows grace, and him who receives it. To forget this truth, and speak, on the one hand, as if religious ‘exercises’ (as they are called) were all our own self-acting, self-reflecting spiritual gymnastics, or, on the other hand, to expect that God will bestow His best gifts on our souls without our being at the pains to ask for them, and will always open for us a door at which we never knock,—is, in either case, a grievous mistake. No man can pray believing prayer to be merely self-acting; and, albeit God in His mercy does often seek us when we wander from Him, yet the very Heaven-sent impulse then given seems always to be an impulse to *pray*; to return to our Father’s house, and say, ‘I have sinned.’ If we neglect such inspirations, and draw no nigher to God because of them, He does nothing more. He does not force us into His arms, as He forces the planets round the sun. I have just said that no man can pray believing prayer to be merely self-acting. It is needful to believe that we can move another will than our own by our supplications, before it is possible to put forth the earnest appeal of real prayer. It will be replied, perhaps, that this statement is untrue; and that solemn, premeditated acts of resolution and aspiration are properly prayers; even when they who use them

‘Bow alone
Each before the judgment throne
Of his own aweless soul’;

or of an image of Buddha, or a picture of Clotilde de Vaux. But it seems to me that to give such emotions and resolutions the name of prayers, is simply to confound two different things, just as it would be to confound a soliloquy with a dialogue or

address. The soliloquy may, indeed, run on the same topic as the address, and may readily be made to borrow its forms ; but it is not the same thing, and to give it the same name is merely to cheat ourselves by misuse of words. To pray, as we understand the word, is to address a person, human or Divine, who is understood by him who prays actually to exist and to hear his address. To extemporize before an abstraction, *consciously recognized as such*, is not to pray. Even to address, after the Buddhist fashion, a being who, albeit he once lived upon earth, is now supposed to be unconscious of the act of his worshipper, is so far different from what we Westerns mean by 'prayer,' that the intelligent races who maintain such a practice see no absurdity in constructing their self-acting windmills with prayers written on their sails, to perform the barren ceremony in their stead. If there be no conscious person to hear prayer, there may just as well be no conscious person to pray. A machine will answer all the purposes of the case."—Frances Power Cobbe in her Preface to "Alone to the Alone," pp. 19-21.

Note G (p. 127).

GOD MOST BLESSED FOR EVER.

"God as love is blessed for ever in the communion of His own triune Being. God is not revealed to us as a blank unit, but as a living unity, possessing Divine society in Himself, and morally and spiritually complete in His own manifoldness of being. The creation, thus, is in no sense necessary to the perfectness of the triune God over all blessed for ever."—Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth in his "Orthodox Theology of To-day."

Note H (p. 137).

THE HOSPITAL TEST OF THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

The following notes written at the time will be found to deal more fully with this subject than was possible in the text :—

In a letter which Professor Tyndall received from a friend

and communicated to the *Contemporary Review* (July 1872), it is suggested that the efficacy of prayer may be put to an experimental test. It is believed by both that "quantitative precision" may be conferred "on the action of the Supernatural in Nature," but whether this be negative or positive must depend upon the statistical results. The method suggested is the following. Out of a vast number of legitimate objects contemplated in prayer, that of the cure of disease and prevention of death is selected. "There appears," says the Professor's anonymous correspondent, "to be one source from a study of which the absolute calculable value of prayer (I speak with the utmost reverence) can almost certainly be ascertained. I mean its influence in affecting the course of a malady, or in averting the fatal termination." Thereupon the writer proceeds to divide the prayers offered on behalf of the sick into *general* and *special*, the former contemplating in a general, "wholesale" way the multitude of sick that lie in helplessness throughout the world; the latter entering into the particular cases known to the petitioner, and dealing with the matter in detail. It is *assumed* that the latter must of necessity be more efficacious. He then continues:—

"For the purpose of our inquiry I do not propose to ask that one single child of man should be deprived of his participation in all that belongs to him of this vast influence. But I ask that one single ward or hospital, under the care of first-rate physicians and surgeons, containing certain numbers of patients afflicted with those diseases which have been best studied, and of which the mortality rates are best known, whether the diseases are those which are treated by medical or surgical remedies, should be, during a period of not less, say, than three or five years, made the object of special prayer by the whole body of the faithful, and that at the end of that time the mortality rates should be compared with the past rates, and also with that of other leading hospitals, similarly well managed, during the same period. Granting that time is given, and numbers are sufficiently large so as to ensure a minimum of error from accidental disturbing causes, the experiment will be exhaustive and complete.

"I might have proposed to treat two sides of the same

hospital, managed by the same men—one side to be the object of special prayer, the other to be exempted from all prayer. It would have been the most rigidly logical and philosophic method. But I shrink from depriving any of—I had almost said—his natural inheritance in the prayers of Christendom. Practically, too, it would have been impossible; the unprayed-for ward would have attracted the prayers of believers as surely as the lofty tower attracts electric fluid. The experiment would be frustrated. But the opposite character of my proposal will commend it to those who are naturally the most interested in its success—those, namely, who conscientiously and devoutly believe in the efficacy against disease and death of special prayer. I open a field for the exercise of their devotion. I offer an occasion of demonstrating to the faithless an imperishable record of the real power of prayer.”

Now it may be observed at the outset that one of the first principles in prayer, as accepted by believers, is that we *do not expect to be heard for our much speaking* (Matt. vi. 7), and consequently the committal to the Infinite Father of the sickness of humanity by a truly sympathetic soul may cover so completely *every* case as altogether to render nugatory such a proposed demonstration as this. Unless, therefore, the writer can *insulate* a ward from the sympathies of the faithful, and such he cannot do, then the conditions needful for his experiment altogether fail.

But, it may be said, if the *quantity* of prayer be no necessary element in securing the answer, might not the faithful be appealed to on public grounds to insulate their sympathies according to the necessities of the experiment? To this we reply that Christian men dare assume no such presumptuous position, which would be yielding to the world's demand for “a sign from Heaven,” when neither the example of Christ nor any promise of the Word warrants such obedience.

Besides, the sacrifice of sympathy could have no adequate result. The writer speaks in a magnanimous spirit of “offering an occasion of demonstrating to the faithless an imperishable record of the real power of prayer.” If he desires “an imperishable record of the real power of prayer,” we refer him to the eleventh of Hebrews; but he manifestly

deceives himself if he supposes that the demonstration which he is anxious to secure would, if successful, be anything more to his successors than this sacred induction is to *us*. Five years of experiment, were the conditions possible, would not satisfy the experience of our children ; but he would require, if *prayer is to be demonstrated to the senses*, to have the ward taken in perpetuity, and the gate of the supernatural always open. That is to say, a perpetual sacrifice must be provided to secure a perpetual demonstration for men who, under the idea that they illustrate mental strength thereby, take up the position of Thomas, and declare that "Except I see, I will not believe." "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

Must we, then, if this effort to *reintroduce miracle* can only prove abortive, give up the possibility of proving the efficacy of prayer? By no means ; and in this belief we proceed to establish two points upon evidence that should satisfy, we humbly conceive, every impartial mind, and which will be at least a contribution to this controversy on prayer.

I. *The permanence of the laws of Nature offers no valid objection to the efficacy of prayer even for sensible blessings.*

Now, in forming a proper conception of the Divine relations to Nature, it is needful to clear the ground of every notion that is unreasonable or superstitious. In adopting this course we are following no less distinguished a guide than Dr. Tyndall himself. In his paper, entitled "Thoughts on Prayer and Natural Law," he, with his usual clearness and beauty, expatiates upon the superstitions of savage life which refer natural phenomena to personal agency, and he very properly states that careful observation of nature destroys those superstitions. But what we are anxious to bring out is that he carries his inference altogether beyond his premises when he eliminates personal volition from the economy of nature, and insinuates that God's volitional relations to nature have ceased. These are his words :—

"Observation tends to chasten the emotions and to check those structural efforts of the intellect which have emotion for their base. One by one natural phenomena have been asso-

ciated with their proximate causes ; and the idea of direct personal volition mixing itself in the economy of nature is retreating more and more." *

Again he says, in describing what is meant by the *conservation of energy* :—

" The Proteus changes, but he is ever the same ; and his changes in nature, supposing no miracle to supervene, are the expression, not of spontaneity, but of *physical necessity*." †

And yet again he says :—

" The principle referred to teaches us that the Italian wind, gliding over the crest of the Matterhorn, is as firmly ruled as the earth in its orbital revolution round the sun ; and that the fall of its vapour into clouds is exactly as much a matter of necessity as the return of the seasons. The dispersion, therefore, of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal would be as much a miracle as the rolling of the Rhone over the Grimsel precipices and down Haslithal to Brienz." ‡

Now what it is necessary here to determine is what Dr. Tyndall means by excluding " personal volition " and " spontaneity " in the first two quotations from the procession of Nature, while in the last he only excludes " the special volition of the Eternal." Does he admit the *general* volition of the Eternal in the problem ? for if he do not, then it seems to us that " special volition " is, if not tautological, at least misleading. But assuming that Dr. Tyndall's position is that the Divine volition, in an unmiraculous age like ours, is no element in the problem of Nature, and that, as Mr. Wallace in his " Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection " puts it, the world would not come to chaos if left to law alone (p. 281), on what ground does this elimination of the Deity from His handiwork take place ? This, we take leave to say, is the weak point of the science of our time, for it is all owing to what we proceed to show is an *inadequate notion of the Divine greatness*.

There is a crude idea lying in our hearts that one characteristic of greatness is *indifference to details*. Because we

* " Fragments of Science," Sixth Edition, vol. ii., p. i.

† Page 4.

‡ Page 5.

see men with largeness of soul often so occupied with thoughts and principles as to neglect the details of daily life, attentive only to the pounds and contemptuous towards the pence of life, we in our superficiality conclude that the great God is in this respect such an one as ourselves. What is the foundation of the objection to the Gospel in view of the inconceivable greatness of the universe? It is really because the objectors imagine it derogatory to greatness to be supposed to have lavished such attention and volition upon "our little sand-grain of an earth." To us it has been very painful to find Dr. Tyndall, in his "Fragments of Science" (vol. ii., pp. 37-38), reproducing this objection, and allowing his usual penetration to desert him.

The truth is all the other way. Real greatness is microscopic as well as telescopic; it can lavish attention upon the minutest details as well as upon the mightiest principles. When Mr. Wallace, under the impression that his is the higher conception of Deity, affirms, "I cannot believe that there is in it [the world] no inherent power of developing beauty or variety, and that the direct action of the Deity is required to produce each spot or streak on every insect, each detail of structure in every one of the million of organisms that live or have lived on the earth," we reply that so great is God that He can attend to each detail of His universe and carry it out, down to the spotting and streaking of the insect, as well as guide "His hunting-dogs over the zenith in their leash of sidereal fire." Ours is the worthier, the higher, the grander conception, which believes God to count the very hairs of our head and "cater for the sparrows," and be a Party to the minutest as well as mightiest of those lawful works that are being transacted in the universe. As Hagenbach says of Herder, so may we, with the proper modification, say of our God, "This faithfulness to one's calling, and this activity of a great man, in apparently small affairs, is the test of real greatness of mind."*

So far, therefore, from accepting of this current elimination of the Divine will from Nature, upon which science insists, we

* "German Rationalism," p. 172.

repudiate it as based upon a lower conception of God than Christianity gives. Dr. Tyndall may imagine that he occupies the higher ground when he dissociates "the Italian wind gliding over the crest of the Matterhorn" from the volition of the Eternal, but we fearlessly assert that as we mused on more than one occasion round that mighty mountain's base, and blessed the Light-giver for the cloudless sunshine in which the Pennine Alps were bathed, we were as true to science as he, and more respectful to our God. Nay more, we venture to assert that our conception is the more reasonable of the two, and that quite unconsciously our scientific friends are fostering a *superstition*. It is reasonable to believe in a first cause; it is, as we have shown, a more worthy conception of that first cause to believe in His attention to details than to suppose that He relegates them to laws with inherent and independent energies—to insist, notwithstanding these considerations, upon regarding God as "the unknown and unknowable," and to worship at the altar in Athens, notwithstanding the natural theology of St. Paul, is, it appears to us, nothing but *scientific superstition*.

Starting, then, with this impregnable position that Nature is the expression of a Divine will, the laws of Nature are consequently the outcome of the will of God. A personal God is behind this Nature, and in her laws is speaking to His children. But, then, are not the laws of Nature permanent in character, and must we not consequently conclude that if they express the will of the Law-giver, that will has been fixed and is changeless? In other words, has not God expressed His will once and for ever, and taken up an immutable position in His universe? Now this looks exceedingly specious until it is analysed. If the laws of Nature are changeless, if permanence is to be assigned to *all* of them without exception, then God has parted with His freedom, and become a slave in His own creation. Now we are prepared to admit the permanence of the *physical* laws of Nature, we shall go as far as Dr. Huxley or Dr. Tyndall, or any of the scientific giants of our age, demand in view of their inductions, but we at the same time recognize "freedom of the will" as also a law of Nature; that is, an element in the constitution of the

universe, without which the universe could not exist, and therein we recognize the soft spot, the oasis, in the wide wilderness of physical law.

It is perfectly useless for scientific men to blink the significance of the "freedom of the will" as it enters into the order of Nature. We demand even more than the dry statement of Dr. Huxley in his celebrated essay on "The Physical Basis of Life," that "our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events" *—more even than Dr. Tyndall gives us when he says, "As regards *direct* action upon natural phenomena, man's will is confessedly powerless, but it is the trigger which, by its own free action, liberates the Divine power." † We demand that scientific men shall recognize in "freedom of the will" a law of Nature in all its ranges from the minutest movements of animal life up to the most pathetic appeals of man. To speak of volition counting "something," and to compare it to a "trigger" liberating the Divine power, is certainly *not to overstate* its importance. The fact is, that the force of gravitation, of heat, of light—in a word, of any of the so-called laws of Nature, dwindles into insignificance before this great law of animal life, the "freedom of the will."

We know something of the frantic effort that Comte and his school have made to ignore this freedom, and, that there is a disposition even in our scientific men, who repudiate positivism most heartily, to ignore, or at least undervalue it, need not be denied. Of course the admission of this freedom renders hopeless that dream of *prevision* which science has so fondly indulged, and indeed that dream may be dismissed until the creature-will is led up to unison with the Divine.‡ But as observers in nature we dare not ignore this great law of animal life, the freedom of the will.

Let us observe how it enters into the domain of permanent law and acts like a sovereign there. We are no chained

* "Lay Sermons," p. 159.

† "Fragments of Science," vol. ii., p. 12.

‡ Cf. "La Philosophie de La Liberté," par Ch. Secretan, vol. i., p. xx., etc.

slaves to the chariot wheels of nature ; we can lay our living hand on these revolving wheels of fate and make them do our bidding. Even Comte had to own that there are such things as *voluntary* modifications within this gigantic system of laws, and he argued against the Divine existence because such things were allowed. He thought of a God who would brook no fellow-workers in His house nor any self-willed children. But it is with the fact of freedom we are dealing now, and it is undeniable that WILL becomes the charioteer, under whom are yoked the plunging horses of LAW, and he can guide them round the path of safety, or whip them over the wall into chaos and black night.

But this is not all. One *will* can modify another *will* as well as modify law. Not only can a bird modify the result of the law of gravitation when she *wills* to take her flight in the midst of heaven, but she can modify the conditions of her offspring, responding to the cry of the young ones for food and heat, *hearing and answering prayer*. A strong man can not only lift a stone and thus modify the result of the law of gravitation, but he can also lift a child, and thus hear and answer prayer. And all through the realm of animal life, from its minutest movement up to the appeals of man, we have prayer uttered and prayer answered, notwithstanding that these beings tenant the home of changeless law. This realm of ANALOGY will be found replete with illustration of the existence of prayer in nature.

Not only so, but one *will* may *resist* another, as well as modify it, in strict accordance with the permanence of natural law. Every man is conscious of the power to take his own course in spite of man, of devil, and, let us reverently say it, *in spite of God*. Freedom of the will is a sovereign attribute, and carries its dangers with it as every sovereignty is found to do.

Now we argue if freedom is thus the prerogative of the creature, if we, with our limited knowledge of nature and of law, can, notwithstanding, modify results amazingly, if we can transform continents, make wildernesses gardens, floor and carpet the ocean with magnificent fleets, and within certain limits (and these by no means narrow) do all our pleasure,

shall we deny the prerogative to Him who is the Author of nature, in whom nature exists, who is never out of her domain, but the omnipresent Worker and Witness? Are His hands to be tied and the children's to be free? Is the permanence of laws, when taken individually, and which admit in combination of endless modification, as the Duke of Argyll has shown,* to hinder Him from accomplishing all His pleasure in the sensible sphere? If a pigeon-breeder can produce in a given time, as Mr. Darwin tells us, almost any kind of feather or crop you prescribe, while the laws of nature remain constant, shall an analogous power of modification be denied to the Supreme?

And yet again, if one mind can mould another according almost to its pleasure, if one creature-will can modify another marvellously, if one master-will can rule "the fierce democracy" and manipulate the multitude according almost to his sovereign pleasure, shall we deny to Him who has all hearts in His hand, and who knows our nature better than we do ourselves, the power of manipulating these creature-wills with a view to a certain definite result? Reason and analogy cry out against it.

Besides, when we consider that God, who alone of all existences is in *full* possession of the facts and laws of nature, has consequently at command the elements necessary for scientific *prevision*, and sees the end of all these variable as well as constant forces from the beginning, is it unreasonable to suppose that His purpose and plan embraced man's prayer, nay more, man's indefinite longings, sighs, and tears, so as to respond to them in His all-wise way? To Him who steps out of His everlasting in every creative and providential act, it cannot be impossible to embrace the long future with its countless calls, to make arrangements ages before, and to carry these arrangements out in man's living present so as to be faithful to the promise, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

II. *While the possibility of God answering prayer in the sensible sphere has been established, it has to be remarked*

* "Reign of Law," pp. 96-99.

further that it would be highly inconvenient for Him to allow prayer to be put to the test of sense.

Now when we say so, we hope that we shall not be misunderstood. God has answered prayer in the sensible sphere in such a way as forced men to exclaim, "This is the finger of God." The miracles, which we take leave to say come down to us with as satisfactory testimonials as Dr. Tyndall's friend could collect supposing his experiment possible and successful, are demonstrations to the senses of the power and efficacy of prayer. The great miracle of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, round which, as a centre, all other remedial miracles cluster, is as historically certain as any other fact within the compass of human experience, and it was the great answer of God to prayer. (Heb. v. 7.)

And God answers prayer in the sensible sphere still—He gives men their request, He allows them to have their headstrong way often, when they insist on sensible success, on riches, on popularity, on glory, on indulgence. They may not possibly pray for these things in definite petitions, but the longings of their souls are, as Emerson puts it, "prayers heard throughout all nature, though for cheap ends." He gives them their request, but sends leanness into their souls. (Psalm cvi. 15.)

Yes, and He hears "prayer for the sick," and answers it—sometimes in restoration to health, sometimes in "the abundant entrance"; but whether in summer brightness or in winter gloom the consummation comes, the intercessors believe that prayer has had its answer. They *believe* it, we repeat, although if you ask them to demonstrate it to your senses, they merely stare at you, and wonder if they must be called upon to demonstrate the existence of colours to the blind. With them believing is seeing, while your demand is for seeing before believing.

And if it be further asked, What good is there in all this prayer which has no answer that can satisfy those who walk "according to the appearance of things" (*διὰ ἐῖδους*—2 Cor. v. 7), and not "by faith"? then the reply is easy. It is great good to the interceding soul to commune with the great Spirit about the sick, it is great good to press our

creaturely sympathies for the sick upon His attention, while at the same time we use all known means and remedies, and tell Him to do what He sees to be best. The remedies are but the outcome of His love, prayer is the appeal to that love and the resting in it, and the answer, whatever it may be, comes to us, although *you* may hardly see how, as the answer of love.

But it may be said, "Your faith is superstitious." To this the reply is what we have said on the first point, "Our faith is reasonable, more reasonable, more brave, more invigorating than your doubt." We are on surer ground in thus worshipping a God who may be known in endearing, loving relations than if we merely trusted that there is a God over the wall of nature, but who never shows Himself through the lattice.

If again it be said, "Would not such ocular demonstration as is suggested be exceedingly desirable? Would not the world yield itself up to God if it *saw* His hand and *felt* His finger? If successful, would the world not submit at once to the Supreme?" we reply, such ocular demonstration would be highly inconvenient. It would require, as we have tried to show, *permanence* to have its due effect. It would also, which is much more serious, translate Christianity from the sphere of *faith* to the sphere of *sight*. Prayer, receiving a definite sensible answer in one sphere of life, would be plied in every sphere for analogous results. The world would join the Church, not out of motives of self-denial, but out of self-indulgence. Christians would be transmuted into mercenaries, and, as an eloquent French preacher has said, disciples "would demand deliverance from sickness and temptation, and immediately their prayer would be answered, and suffering and evil would flee away as a shadow, and from their level pathway all asperities would disappear. Their desires, formed with difficulty, would be visibly accomplished, . . . and do you not see," he continues, "that all would like to be Christians such as you, and all, like you, would pray? For love? Oh no, indeed! but from interest, of course." *

The fact is, that if we are to have a Christian life, faith is essential to it, and all effort to eliminate this element will give

* "Sermons," par Eug. Bersier, vol. iv., p. 119.

you—not life, but the disappointment of death. If we are to have any living relations with God we must be prepared to *trust* Him; if we insist on trusting Him no farther than we see Him, it is but little we shall see of the King's face. In the clear light of the "spirit and the truth" into which He calls us, the perplexities of the lower regions of sense vanish, and we see light, and, it may be unconsciously, become *luminous*, but we cannot translate the vision of faith into a panorama to satisfy the curious, who will only believe in what they see.

NOTE I (p. 138).

EXPERIENCE THE TRUE PROOF OF CHRISTIANITY.

An excellent discourse will be found in Decoppet's "Sermons," entitled, "La Vérité du Christianisme Prouvée par l'expérience." Some significant remarks will also be found in Green's "Witness of God and Faith," pp. 96-99. We content ourselves with the following quotation from the admirable volume of Dr. Wace, already referred to, and with another from Dr. Löber:—

"Of course, if the historic reality of the events narrated in the Gospels could be disproved, we should have to reconsider our position altogether; and it is hard to see what would remain of the beliefs and convictions which so many generations of Christians have held dear. But there is no such disproof; and, on the other hand, we possess—every Christian should possess in his own experience—a conviction, not less clear than that to which St. Peter appealed, of the living power and life of our risen and ascended Lord. After all, there is this permanent evidence to the truth of our Lord's resurrection, and to His present glory and power, that all Christians, and the Church at large, can approach Him by prayer, and receive from Him a grace and power, of which they may be as assured as of any other fact in their experience, to enable them continually to realize in increasing degree the graces of the spiritual life. In proportion as we realize this privilege, will our path be untroubled by the

shadows of doubt, and we shall be enabled to bear witness to others of the power of the Lord's resurrection" (p. 171).

After an admirable statement about the compatibility of answers to prayer with the Divine predestination, Dr. Löber thus proceeds:—

“Der uns inwohnende heilige Geist, der an allen Vorgängen unsres Lebens wirksamen Antheil nimmt und sie zum Gebet gestaltet, vermittelt auch den jedesmaligen Rückschlag des Gebetes in der Erhörung. Der unveränderliche Gott kann auf alle Veränderungen des menschlichen Lebens eingehn, weil er überweltlich und innenweltlich zugleich, weil er der Lebendige ist und weil er sich in Christo in die endliche Entwicklung dahingegeben hat, um sie mit ewigem Inhalt ruckweise zu erfüllen, um gegenüber aller Verlassenheit und Traurigkeit des Menschen immer von Neuem zu setzen seine Liebe und Seligkeit. Die Erhörung und die Vorherbestimmung Gottes stehn so wenig mit einander in Widerspruch, dass die Erhörung in einzelnen Fall vielmehr der durch unsre Mitwirkung mitveranlasste lebendige Vollzug der Vorherbestimmung genannt werden muss. Die innre Thatsache der Erhörung kann nicht bestritten, aber denen auch nicht bewiesen werden, die sie in sich nicht erfahren haben. Wem aber die allgemeine Selbstbejahung Gottes in Wort und Sakrament zu allgemein erscheint, der sollte doch die Individualisirung jener Selbstbejahung in dem betenden Christen anerkennen und einräumen, dass die durch die Erhörung in dem Beter erzeugte ruhige, widerspruchslose und friedensreiche Identität mit sich selber keine Chimäre sei. Ist aber die Thatsache der Erhörung durch die eigne Erfahrung festgestellt, so kann sie auch begrifflich zerlegt, in ihrem innern Zusammenhang blossgelegt werden, ohne dass sie dabei zur kalten Leiche wird.”—Dr. Löber's “Die Lehre vom Gebet,” s. 75.

NOTE J. (p. 151).

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

It is supposed by some that even one intrusion of the supernatural into the natural would endanger the edifice of science.

Thus Professor Green affirms, "If we assert a suspension of its [nature's] laws, a break in its continuity, to have taken place even in a single case; if we maintain so much as the possibility of an intrusion or 'projection' of extra-natural agency within the natural; though we may be willing to stake our life upon the proposition, or more truly upon some moral or spiritual interest which we wrongly suppose it to involve, we are none the less saying what is intrinsically unmeaning; for we are affirming the existence of knowledge and nature, and at the same time denying the principle in virtue of which alone knowledge is possible, and there is for our consciousness such a thing as nature."—"The Witness of God and Faith," p. 83.

In opposition to such a "crotchet" of science as is thus stated, we may be allowed to quote as a set-off the following:—

"I certainly intend no discourtesy, yet in justice to the churches I am constrained to say that ignorance of what evangelical teaching really is seems to be the occasion of not a few common objections to it. When it is said, for example, that the Church founds its belief in the Divine Person of Christ upon the miracles which He wrought, the statement falls very far wide of the facts. It is the character of Christ which is the supreme evidence of His supernatural Person. The chief argument for the divinity of Christ is His humanity. Close your eyes for the time being to all accounts of the mighty work of Jesus; seek to form a clear conception of His Person and life; and that character, when once really seen, will be its own evidence, the proof of Jesus' unique oneness with the Father. Then read again the accounts of the miracles, and they will seem no longer miracles when narrated of such a Christ; they are as natural to Him as our commonest deeds are to us; they are contrary to our experience of other men, but not contrary to the world's experience of Jesus Christ. The divine humanity of Christ is the citadel of evangelical faith. Miracles have still their evidential value; they are the collateral securities of faith; but why question the collaterals when the Divine handwriting in the character of Christ remains unimpeached and unimpeachable?"—Rev. Dr. Newman Smyth in his "Orthodox Theology of To-day."

And again from another author:—

“Where, it is asked, are the evidences of the Saviour’s interpositions in the affairs of ordinary life, in the natural course of physical existence? Miraculous signs, such as those recorded in the Gospels, are no longer exhibited among us, and how are we to believe in a constant personal action which is not open to our perception? Now, the first and most direct reply to such objections was anticipated by the centurion,* whose signal display of faith is recorded in the text as having aroused our Lord’s admiration. He realized, from his experience of the methods of action in human affairs, that there was no occasion, for the purpose of our Lord’s intervention, of any extraordinary and conspicuous manifestation. If he, a man under authority, yet had soldiers under him, and could say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to his servant, Do this, and he doeth it; our Lord had but to speak the word to those natural elements of which He was the Creator and Master, and His will would be surely, though it might be silently, executed. But the excellence of the centurion’s faith in this respect deserves a more particular consideration, and it will be more apparent by contrast with two opposite states of mind. The contrast to it which our Lord chiefly encountered was the peculiar disposition of the Jews, who, except they saw signs and wonders, would not believe. They fully recognized the existence of a Divine power possessing command over all the forces of nature; but they would not believe in our Lord’s ability to exert it, or in His readiness to aid them, unless it were manifested by some signal and extraordinary means. But there is another state of mind, akin to this in reality, and yet contrasted with it, which is prevalent at the present day. The form of unbelief which we have to encounter—and to encounter in ourselves, no doubt, as well as in others—is not one which craves for startling and overpowering instances of Divine interposition, but one which doubts the reality of personal interposition at all, on the part of God, in the course of nature, and in human life. To the Jews that interposition had, so to say, become

* See Matt. viii. 5-10.

so common and familiar an idea that they thought nothing of it, and scarcely regarded it as specially concerning them, unless it were exhibited in some exceptional form. To many among ourselves, on the other hand, the idea has become so unfamiliar that we find a difficulty in applying it to every-day life; and because we see no signs and wonders, we, too, do not believe. Starting in the opposite direction, we have come round to the same point as the Jews. Modern thought is absorbed and fascinated by the contemplation of the order of nature and the constancy of its methods. Fixing its attention almost exclusively on the impersonal part of nature, it fails to penetrate to the personality behind; and thus—even, it is to be feared, to many true Christian hearts—the intense conviction expressed in the Psalms of the living God being present with us, and directly acting upon us in every moment of our existence, controlling for us every circumstance of our lives, and ordering all that concerns ourselves and others, and the course of the world at large, in accordance with His will, with His approval and disapproval, and with His own spiritual purposes—this realization of the personal presence and action of the living God—in many cases, alas! absolutely denied and excluded—is, it is to be feared, in many others grievously enfeebled. Now, that which forms the great and abiding wonder of the faith of the centurion is that, by one simple observation, he supplies the conclusive and permanent answer to all these doubts and denials. As Luther puts it, with his usual vividness, ‘This heathen soldier turns theologian, and begins to dispute in as fine and Christian-like a manner as would suffice for a man who had been many years Doctor of Divinity.’ He cuts the knot at once by that bold reasoning by analogy from man to God, of which our Lord’s teaching is so full, and which is involved in the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, such as the Divine Fatherhood and the forgiveness of sins. He says, simply, that the kind of action which men exhibit must be possible for God. It is impossible for Him to be more restricted in His action than His creatures; and if they are able by subordinate agencies to carry out their will, and to modify by the interposition of that will what would otherwise be the natural course of events, it is inconceivable

that it should be impossible for Him to do the same."—Rev. Dr. Wace, in his "Gospel and its Witnesses," pp. 98-101.

Note K (p. 152).

ON THE WISDOM OF MIRACLES CEASING.

We have all along implied that miracles have ceased. We have tried to show that such an admission has no effect upon the question of the efficacy of prayer. But the cessation of miracles is an *ethical* question, and not a physical necessity. Its ground is the unwillingness of God to put His intelligent creatures to any intellectual confusion. As the editor of the *Spectator* has said in his admirable summing up of the controversy on September 7th, 1872, "We may fairly assume that no modest Christian will pray for a miracle for his own particular benefit, or that of his friends—*i.e.*, for any interference which would unsettle all other men's confidence in the great invariable laws known to us, and therefore their trust in the God of nature—nay, even that he could hardly believe it permitted to a religious mind so to pray."

Note L (p. 152).

ON ALLEGED HEALING BY PRAYER.

From what has been already said about the hospital test, it will be inferred that we have not had evidence sufficient to satisfy us upon the subject of present healing by means of prayer only. That this is a quite distinct question from what we have been considering will appear on the least thought. It really amounts to this, Does God at present set means at defiance, and encourage men to expect healing without them? Now a study of our Lord's miracles will show that the healing of the body was never granted to discourage personal exertion, but to secure it. Christ's philanthropy was of the wisest kind, and insured the activity as members of society of those who had been healed. A course of healing, consequently, which would put medical science to confusion and issue in a contempt

for means, would in the end prove disastrous. On these grounds, therefore, we would be very doubtful about alleged cases of cure by prayer alone. That there are cases of nervous disorder, however, where cheerful and tranquillizing surroundings and religious exercises may go far to restore the troubled one to peace, we can well believe. We have been ourselves to Männedorf, on Lake Zürich, and have seen the simple and tranquillizing environment which Dorothea Trüdel afforded to her patients, and can well believe that for such a class of disorders as we have indicated such treatment may be most suitable. But such cures would seem to us to be according to the order of nature. We have not yet got to the bottom of the influence of the imagination and of conscience upon disease. There are doubtless many important physical facts lying in that direction, and which the alleged cures by prayer have brought within the range of practical solution. The following further quotation from Dr. Wace is worthy of study in this connection :—

“ It is contrary, in fact, to all the analogy of God’s dealings, in nature and in grace alike, to excuse us from the due exercise, to the utmost of our powers, of our natural faculties. During His stay on earth He took us, as it were, by the hand, and placed us in the right path, and He has since been training us in all the ways of spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical truth. Undoubtedly the physical condition of mankind has been vastly ameliorated, and is being daily more and more ameliorated, by the elevation of their moral nature through the Gospel, and through spiritual grace ; and we may well believe that infinite possibilities in this respect still remain, which God designs us to realize in the exercise, under that spiritual influence, of our natural powers. He would have us exert ourselves in all ways to the utmost, according to His own lesson in one of His miracles, ‘ Gathering up the fragments, that nothing be lost.’ But what a supreme blessing to be assured that He is ever with us, to bless and to complete every effort that we can make ! The law laid down by the Apostle applies to our whole career. God will not protect us from all temptation, nor deliver us at one stroke from the evils which we have brought upon ourselves. But He is ever near, as

with the disciples in the storm, to ensure that we shall not be overwhelmed: He 'is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' Under His guidance, and with His aid, a way of deliverance from all evils is ever open to us. If we have failed to realize it, let us ask ourselves how far we have appealed to Him with the faith which is exhibited in those examples of His saving power which St. Matthew here brings before us. The rule of His working has ever been, 'As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.' All things—all things necessary for our spiritual health, and for our physical welfare also, so far as the latter is compatible with the former—are still, as ever, possible to him that believeth; and let us pray, at the conclusion of such meditations, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.'"—"The Gospel and its Witnesses," pp. 111-113.

Note M (p. 154).

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST ON THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER.

In asking attention to *Christ's* ideas on the subject of prayer, we are simply following the method which we invariably pursue in the investigation of any subject. When we desire a knowledge of any particular subject, whether scientific, literary, or religious, we go at once to the best mind, living or dead, to whom we have access, and ascertain what he thinks upon it. It is a waste of time to begin with small minds, if we have, through books or personal intercourse, access to the really great. In going straight to Christ, then, we are by well-nigh universal admission consulting the most exalted mind which humanity has produced. "There seem," says an able writer, "to be three ultimates of our verifiable knowledge, three fixed facts of human experience, beyond which we cannot go; and these three are on the one side, matter and force; and on the other the character of Jesus Christ. Physics cannot carry us beyond the former; and moral history leaves us before the latter as its last, grandest, and most enduring fact."*

* "The Religious Feeling," by Newman Smyth. New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co.; p. 88.

Or to quote from another and thoroughly impartial witness, the late John Stuart Mill, "Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His personal teaching. It is of no use to say that Christ as exhibited in the Gospels is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. . . . Who among His disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee; and certainly not St. Paul, whose character and idiosyncrasies were of a totally different sort. . . . About the life and sayings of Jesus there is a stamp of personal originality combined with profundity of insight, which, if we abandon the idle expectation of finding scientific precision where something very different was aimed at, must place the Prophet of Nazareth, even in the estimation of those who have no belief in His inspiration, in the very first rank of the men of sublime genius of whom our species can boast. When this pre-eminent genius is combined with the qualities of probably the greatest moral reformer and martyr to that mission who ever existed upon earth, religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue, from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour to so live that Christ would approve our life."*

In proposing, therefore, to consult Christ upon the subject of prayer, we are simply proposing to consult the highest authority, and, by the admission even of His enemies, the most transcendent moral Genius which our species has produced.

Now, when we take up the Gospels, we find that Jesus not only gave instruction about the nature of prayer, but also made large use of it Himself. It may be safely asserted that He was the most prayerful man who ever lived in this world of

* "Three Essays on Religion," pp. 253-5.

ours. If Luther, amid the multiform duties of the Reformation epoch, declared that he could not get through his work on a less allowance than three hours of daily prayer, it may be similarly said of Him "who went about doing good" that He could not get through His work unless He spent long seasons, and sometimes entire nights, in prayer (cf. Luke vi. 12, 13). And if from this fact of His prayerfulness we advance to the spirit and substance of His prayer, we shall find definite and interesting information.

To one passage in the fourth Gospel we would ask special attention, as affording the exact insight which we seek into the prayerfulness of Christ. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, them also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth; and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father Who hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine ownself do nothing: as I hear I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent Me" (John v. 19-30).

Now let us observe the spirit which this sublime Genius, Jesus Christ, exhibits in this passage. It may be expressed in two words as a spirit of *perfect dependence*. It is well known that the great service rendered by Friedrich Schleiermacher to religion consisted in making the sense of dependence its source. Now it is exactly this sense of dependence that we see exhibited by Jesus Christ in perfection. He could not, by which is meant He would not, do anything of Himself, but always in felt fellowship with the Father. And to this conscious dependence of spirit the Father responded by showing Him ALL THINGS that Himself doeth, even up to the raising of the physically and spiritually dead. Jesus would do nothing in an independent spirit, and the Father, he here asserts, revealed *all* His secrets to Him.

Observe, then, the light which this spirit of dependence sheds upon the prayerfulness of Christ. Prayer was the means employed by Jesus to secure that perfect *rapport* of spirit with the Father, out of which all His work came. Through prayer this genius held high counsel with the Father, obtained the right views of men and things, acquired a distinct idea of what the Father desired in every case, and in consequence met His work fully prepared for its perfect discharge.

Let us take, by way of an example, the first act of prayer on the part of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels, His prayer at His baptism. Of course His youth and development must have exhibited a large devotional element. His prayerful manhood was in fact the continuance of the childlikeness which had characterised Him from the first. He never grew "man-nish" and independent, as we are tempted to do, but maintained before the Father a perfect Sonship. It is in connection with His baptism, however, that we first read about Him praying. "Now, when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and PRAYING, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape, like a dove upon Him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well-pleased" (Luke iii. 21, 22).

"He had prayed. What had He demanded?" says a writer. "We can infer it from what He obtained. In the

first place the heaven was opened. The veil of sense (*chair*) which Jesus had allowed from His birth to interpose between Heaven and Himself was rent; He could decipher to the very bottom the abyss of the Divine decrees; the plan conceived from all eternity for our salvation and our glory was fully unveiled to Him. The thought of God became His own. From this moment a Divine teaching could echo through the earth, and God be revealed to the world."* Or to quote from Dr. Godet's "Commentary on Luke," "Whilst Jesus prayed, His eyes fixed on high, the celestial vault rends itself to His regards, and His eye contemplates the dwelling-place of the eternal light. The spiritual fact, of which this phenomenon is, as it were, the sensible envelope, is the perfect intelligence accorded to Jesus of the Divine plan and of the work of salvation. The treasure of the Divine wisdom is henceforth opened to Him, and He can draw forth every hour the particular light which will be necessary to Him. The first phenomenon represents, then, the *perfect revelation*."

Suppose, then, that we translate into modern phraseology the facts now before us. The will of the Father embraces what we call "the laws" which regulate nature; when, therefore, Jesus asserts, "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth," He claims no less than an insight into the entire Divine administration; a laying bare to the man, Christ Jesus, of the secrets of the universe. This, then, is Jesus Christ's idea of what He gained through prayer. Prayer is, in fact, a means of rising into a fuller understanding of the Divine will and ways. It enables man to contemplate from the highest vantage-ground the will and mind of God, so far as this is revealed to him. Jesus, as we believe, had *full* insight given to Him; but minor minds, while denied in the very nature of things all the insight which Jesus could receive, may get through prayer an increasing insight into the Divine ways, the heaven is opened more and more widely, and the secrets in larger measure revealed.

And here, before proceeding farther, let us notice the bearing of this full insight of Jesus upon the question of *miracles*. If to Jesus, through His perfect *rapprochement* with God the Father,

* Dr. Godet's "La Prière," p. 7.

there was given a full insight into the Father's operations, then the working of miracles became but the application of this higher knowledge. The higher laws, of which presumably miracles are manifestations, being revealed to Jesus, He had only prayerfully to put His knowledge into practice. The miracles are consequently to be regarded as the outcome of insight, such as none of the children of men but Christ received, and received, as we have seen, through the exercise of prayer. The apostolic miracles were admittedly wrought in the name, and by the power, of the unseen yet present Jesus.

But we have much more in the baptismal prayer of Jesus Christ than the effort after a full knowledge of God's will. After the heaven was opened to the praying Saviour, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove. It is evident from this that Jesus sought in prayer not only a knowledge of the Divine will, but also a complete inspiration to enable Him to do that will. Knowledge is meant to be carried into action. The acquisition of knowledge, without any desire to apply it to the benefit of others, is only refined selfishness. Hence we find this greatest genius, Jesus Christ, seeking through prayer an *inspiration* that He may carry His perfect insight into perfect action.

The dove, being an organic whole, indicated the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus in His entirety. If the opened heaven, as we have seen, indicated a *perfect revelation*, then the descending dove indicated a *perfect inspiration*. Through prayer His human soul was reinforced from above. Jesus thus became at once the most enlightened of the sons of men and the most inspired.

And, finally, we are to observe that Jesus received in response to His baptismal prayer the *assurance of His Sonship*. The voice came from Heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well-pleased." This is the conscious relation into which Jesus, as the Son, so perfectly dependent upon the Father, was enabled to enter; and it was this which sustained Him when all at last forsook Him and fled. (John xvi. 32.)

In the experience of Jesus, then, prayer was a means of securing *insight, inspiration, and assurance*. And if we go

over the other instances of His prayers, as given in the Gospels, we shall find that they were all intended to secure one or other of these three ends. Thus if we take His thanksgiving, which both Matthew and Luke record, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 25, 26; cf. also Luke x. 21, 22), we have an instance of *insight* into the Divine administration secured and expressed through prayer. Again, the prayer on the Mount of Transfiguration was the securing of a special *inspiration* for specially difficult work awaiting Him immediately in the valley, as well as in the near future at Jerusalem. If we compare the narratives, we shall find that, on descending from the mount, Jesus has presented to Him the case of the demented child, whom the nine disciples had failed to cure. The case yields to the treatment of Jesus, and He afterwards explains that such a case of insanity would only yield to prayer and fasting. This He had secured on the mountain-top, while the disciples, it would seem, had been prayerless in the valley. The inspiration, it should also be noticed, had been so magnificent as to cause Jesus to become transfigured and luminous before the three disciples ere He descended. (Cf. Luke ix. 28, 29, etc.) Again, His high-priestly prayer, as it has been called, given in John xvii., is a profound meditation upon His work, so far as it has been finished, and a manifestation of that *insight* into the Father's will and His people's needs, which can only be secured through prayer. While, again, Gethsemane and Calvary witnessed prayers in which He secured the personal *assurance of His Sonship* and His acceptance during the terrible ordeal through which He had to pass. We come, consequently, to this conclusion concerning Jesus Christ, that He regarded prayer as a means of securing an *insight* into the Divine plans, an *inspiration* for the performance of His part of them, and an *assurance* of His Sonship while so performing His part.

It will now be needful to pass from the *example* of our great genius to His *precepts* in the matter of prayer. What He had found so helpful to Himself He recommended strongly, as we

may suppose, to others. Having got insight, inspiration, and a comfortable assurance through communion with the Father, He taught men to seek the same blessings in the same way. Hence we find Him giving such directions as these :—

First, the disciples are directed to *come to God as children to a Father*. Jesus realised, as we have seen, a perfect Sonship, and hence He represented God as His correlate, a perfect Father. The fatherhoods of men He represented as helpful analogues of the fatherhood of God. The earthly fathers doubtless do not carry out in a perfect fashion the duties of fatherhood, but upon the whole, as Jesus shows us, they help us to a worthy though imperfect conception of the fatherhood of God. If the fathers of our flesh will listen to the children's articulate petitions, if they will respond with all alacrity to an infant's cry, much more would Jesus have us to expect an audience from the Divine Father, the Father of our spirits.

Secondly, the disciples are to *remember that they are coming to an Omniscient Father*. Jesus was most particular in inculcating this. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him" (Matt. vi. 7, 8). It is not consequently to convey information to the Father that we pray; it is simply to review our needs and the needs of others in the felt presence of Him who knows them all, and understands them infinitely better than we ever can do. And His fuller knowledge does not lead Him to ignore our petitions or despise our prayers. His Omniscience secures attention to tears and sighs and groans unutterable, as well as to the articulate litanies and artistic liturgies of men. To Omniscience there may sometimes be more significance in a tear than in the repetition of the *Magnificat* or the *Te Deum*.

Thirdly, the disciples are to *regulate their petitions according to the demands of the Divine administration*. For the model prayer which Jesus taught His disciples is most majestic and orderly in its arrangement. It is full of that *insight* into God's ways and will which we have seen prayer intended to secure. God is addressed as the heavenly Father, and the

first petition is for the hallowing of His name. Then follows the petition "Thy kingdom come," the authority of the Holy Father to be established broadly and deeply in the hearts of men. Then follows the petition, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," a broad, statesmanlike hope that the Divine will may soon regulate earth as well as heaven. And next comes the modest request for daily bread—daily bread, observe, if consistent with the paramount interests which have gone before; for if our hunger, rather than our satisfaction with bread, shall better help on the kingdom, we will as true disciples submit to the trying dispensation. Then the prayer passes to personal pardon and deliverance from evil. There is consequently due subordination here of personal needs to the universal interest. And this subordination of the personal to the general interest is what Jesus Himself practised. His personal wants, as in the wilderness, in Gethsemane, and on the Cross, were always subordinated to the wider interests of the Divine administration.

Fourthly, *the disciples Jesus shows may have to practise importunity just as He had in prayer to God.* He warned the disciples not to faint if their prayers were not immediately answered. It is childish to be always in a hurry; insisting on instant answers and no credit being given: the disciples are instructed consequently to be importunate in their prayers, and their importunity will be rewarded. Not that there is any merit in importunity any more than in repetition; but there is an *education* in it. Patience has its perfect work—importunity embodies the "patience of hope," not the impatience of fear.

Fifthly, *the disciples, like Jesus Himself, are to pray for their enemies and persecutors in imitation of the policy of their Father in heaven.* Our great genius, Jesus Christ, gives His disciples instruction about prayer from the sunshine and the rain. It is surely interesting and profitable to contrast the different ways in which such a man as Professor Tyndall and such a genius as Jesus Christ interpret the same facts of nature. "But I say unto you," says Jesus, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and

persecute you : that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven ; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." That is to say, the sunshine and the rain, as they fall without respect of persons upon the world, are meant to demonstrate the love of the heavenly Father for His foes as well as for His friends, and should summon us to a kindred love and a magnanimous intercession. But Professor Tyndall urges that "the latest conclusions of science are in perfect accordance with the doctrine of the Master Himself, which manifestly was that the distribution of natural phenomena is not affected by moral or religious causes. 'He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.' " *

Lastly, *the disciples were encouraged by Jesus to hope for greater answers to their prayers than He had received Himself.* In the remarkable address Jesus delivered before He suffered He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and greater works than these shall he do ; because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it " (John xiv. 12-14). These, we must admit, were most magnanimous words. They open up to the disciples greater possibilities than Jesus had realised as yet Himself. They are, however, possibilities in the sphere of work, and of work for the common weal ; not possibilities which can be utilised by selfishness. It is here, as it seems to us, that a large amount of confusion upon this subject of prayer arises. Promises, whose context shows that they are promises to large-hearted philanthropy, are misinterpreted and applied to pitiful, personal considerations. Prayer is not an instrument which selfishness is encouraged to wield, but an instrument by which we rise out of selfishness into increasingly large insight into God's ways and God's will. Hence Jesus encourages the disciples to ask anything in the way of usefulness, which a prayerful, philanthropic spirit leads them

* "Fragments of Science," vol. ii., p. 6.

to entertain, and He will from the Father's right hand make the prayer a prophecy, and grant greater results to their labours than attended His own. And this was realised after the Pentecost. "It is possible, indeed," says Principal Caird in his "Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion," "to carry the finitude and imperfection of our temporal life into the sphere of devotion, to make prayer only a reflection of our earthly anxieties and wants. But the peculiar significance of prayer lies in this, that therein we rise above ourselves; we leave behind the interests which belong to us as creatures of time; we enter into that sphere in which all the discords and evils of the time-world are but deceptive appearances and illusions, or possess no more reality than the passing shadows of clouds that lie here beneath our feet. The world in which we outwardly live is only the unreal and the evanescent making believe to be real; the true, the real, the world of unchangeable and eternal reality, is that in which we pray."

Note N (p. 159).

TOLERATION OF CHRISTIANS TERMINATED BY THE
JEW.

Kahnis, in his last work, "*Der Gang der Kirche*," brings out very interestingly the fact, that as Judaism had been tolerated by the heathen world, and synagogues erected for spiritual as distinguished from idolatrous worship, so Christianity at first was tolerated as a species, it was supposed, of Judaism. But when the Jews turned so madly against the new system, the heathen world began to look more closely into its pretensions, and so discovered that it aimed at nothing less than universal empire. Hence it was a life-and-death struggle which began, and martyrdom, which proved such a support to the new faith, became the not unfrequent test of the sincerity of the Christian.

*Note O (p. 161).*GIBBON'S FIVE NATURAL CAUSES FOR THE PROGRESS
OF CHRISTIANITY.

In his celebrated fifteenth chapter he says :—

“Our curiosity is naturally prompted to inquire by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth. To this inquiry an obvious but satisfactory answer may be returned; that it was owing to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author. But as the truth and reason seldom find so favourable a reception in the world, and as the wisdom of Providence frequently condescends to use the passions of the human heart, and the general circumstances of mankind, as instruments to execute its purposes, we may still be permitted, though with becoming submission, to ask, not indeed what were the first, but what were the secondary causes of the rapid growth of the Christian Church? It will perhaps appear that it was most effectually favoured and assisted by the five following causes:—1. The inflexible zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. 2. The doctrine of a future life improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. 3. The miraculous powers ascribed to the Primitive Church. 4. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. 5. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman Empire.”

Note P (p. 162).

THE SUCCESSION OF SAINTS.

“It can certainly be said, without fear of contradiction, that in every age since the first preaching of the Gospel to the present time, a succession of saints has been maintained, not unworthy to be enrolled with those of the Primitive Church. They have been fewer or more obscure at one time than

another, but no one acquainted with the course of ecclesiastical history will deny their continuous existence. The life of this brotherhood of saints has flowed on in a perennial stream, pure and gracious in itself, and bringing vitality to the arid wastes of natural society, or corrupt Christianity, which lay around its course. Connected with this, and as a consequence of it, is another fact equally conspicuous throughout the Christian ages—that of a power of constant revival and reformation within the Christian Church. This, it must be owned, on candid consideration, is a unique phenomenon in human experience. In all history, except that in which the Church has been the prominent influence, the law of development has been that which prevails in the natural world, of growth up to a certain point, followed by decay. One nature after another has come on the stage of the world's history, and each has brought some new contribution to its life, some new energy, moral or intellectual. Egypt, Greece, and Rome, for instance, have thus succeeded one another, and each has established for a time an imposing civilization. But in each case the civilization became corrupt, and when that corruption had once set in, there was no power of resistance or renovation. But the history of Christendom—a history which is now that of eighteen centuries—is that of a succession of reformations of moral and intellectual life. There is no race, neither Greek, nor Roman, nor Celtic, nor German, which has not from time to time felt this reforming and regenerating power, and which has not thus been enabled to cast off its corruptions and enter on a new career. It was by the influence of the Church, as no impartial historian will question, that out of the corrupted elements of the Greek and Roman world, and the fierce and untamed energies of the Teutonic races, the grand and enduring fabric of our present civilization was built up. The moral and spiritual energies of Christian missionaries exerted a creative force and a power of control which were lacking alike to Greek arts and to Roman arms, and they thus sowed the seeds of an ever-growing Christendom. All other civilizations and faiths have fallen into decay, while this alone exhibits the elements of an enduring vitality.”—Rev. Dr. Wace in his “Gospel and its Witnesses,” pp. 206-8.

Note Q (p. 164).

CERTAINTY THROUGH EXPERIENCE.

“There is an intimate and necessary connection between holiness and truth. Show me a life truly holy, truly serious, devoted, and consecrated to the service of God—I tell you that this life plunges its roots into the soil of truth—I affirm that the power which has created and which sustains this life is a Divine power. That is stronger than all arguments. And, in a word, is it not thus that the most of you have been led to the assurance that the Gospel is the truth? Have you found this assurance at the end of a syllogism, after the philosophical examination of the proofs of Christianity? No, that which has convinced you, is the peaceful and sweet light which it has shed abroad in such a soil as you know; the moral superiority which it has given to such an humble existence as slips away at your side. For myself I declare it, when my faith has traversed epochs of trouble, when it has been for a moment overwhelmed by the objections of sceptical science—that which has established it, that which has re-attached me to Christianity, has been the moral beauty, serenity, and the depth of life in certain Christians whom God in His bounty has allowed me to meet upon my way. That which produces such a life, I said to myself, that which renders it so happy, that which transforms human nature thus—is true. There is not an objection, there is not a system which can stand before such a fact.”—Decoppet’s “Sermons,” pp. 246-7.

Note R (p. 172).CHRISTENDOM THE TRUE EMBODIMENT OF SELF-
RENUNCIATION.

“It is in Christendom that, according to the providence of God, this power has been exhibited; not indeed either adequately or exclusively, but most fully. In the religions of the East the idea of a death to the fleshly self, as the end of the merely human, and the beginning of a Divine life, has not been wanting; nor, as a mere idea, has it been very

different from that which is the ground of Christianity. But there it has never been realised in action, either intellectually or morally. The idea of the withdrawal from sense has remained abstract. It has not issued in such a struggle with the superficial view of things as has gradually constituted the science of Christendom. In like manner that of self-renunciation has never emerged from the esoteric state. It has had no outlet into the life of charity, but a back way always open into the life of sensual license, and has been finally mechanised in the artificial vacancy of the dervish or fakir."—Professor Green's "Witness of God and Faith," pp. 21-2.

Note S (p. 204).

HISTORY OF THE CONTROVERSY.

It will not be needful to refer to the controversy in ancient times. Incidental references to it among the fathers and the schoolmen are to be found; but not until the rise of science properly so called, could the controversy be expected to take serious shape and form.*

There is nothing of special importance upon the subject arising out of the Deistical controversy of last century. Chubb is the only one of the Deists who renounces his faith in prayer, for in his earlier years he believed in and explained admirably the duty of prayer. "To address God," he said, "for the obtaining of a thing, and yet not to propose the obtaining that thing as the end of that address, is absurd."† But he was led to give up his faith in this duty on account of the failure of prayer for the morality of kings.‡ As his position resembles that assumed quite recently by Mr. Galton, it need not at this stage detain us.

* Cf. Jellett's "Efficacy of Prayer," Introduction, pp. xix.-xxxi.

† "Tracts," p. 181, quoted in Principal Cairns' "Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century," p. 91.

‡ Cf. Chubb's "Inquiry concerning Prayer," being Treatise XIII. in his Tracts; also Dr. Jellett's "Efficacy of Prayer," p. xxxiii.

And now we pass on a century, during which other points in the controversy between faith and unbelief occupy attention, until the question of the efficacy of prayer is raised during the visitation of cholera in 1853. Scotland suffered severely from the pestilence, and, in the extremity, a petition was presented by the Presbytery of Edinburgh to Lord Palmerston, who was then Home Secretary, suggesting the propriety in the circumstances of a national fast. "The members were of opinion," writes the Moderator, "that it was likely, in the circumstances, that a national fast would be appointed on royal authority. For this reason they delayed making an appointment for this locality, and directed me, in the meantime, respectfully to request that you would be pleased to say—if you feel yourself at liberty to do so—whether the appointment of a national fast by the Queen is in contemplation. The Presbytery hope to be excused for the liberty they use in preferring this request."

To this petition Lord Palmerston replied, declining to advise Her Majesty to appoint any fast, and advising the Scotch people to look better after their drains. The following is part of his reply:—"Lord Palmerston would, therefore, suggest that the best course which the people of this country can pursue to deserve that the further progress of the cholera should be stayed, will be to employ the interval which will elapse between the present time and the beginning of next spring in planning and executing measures by which those portions of their towns and cities which are inhabited by the poorest classes, and which, from the nature of things, must most need purification and improvement, may be freed from those causes and sources of contagion which, if allowed to remain, will infallibly breed pestilence, and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united, but inactive, nation."*

This rather ungracious reply of the veteran statesman gave rise at the time to a considerable amount of criticism. It was not that his opinion upon the religious point was in itself of any particular value, but that he had formulated what was

* Cf. Buckle's "History of Civilisation," First Edition, vol. ii., Notes, pp. 592-595.

existing in many minds—a persuasion that, for such a disaster as the cholera, prayer was totally inefficacious. We cannot do better than quote the observations of Mr. Buckle upon this incident, as given at the end of his second volume, which was published in 1861. He says:—“This correspondence between the Scotch clergy and the English statesman is not to be regarded as a mere passing episode of light or temporary interest. On the contrary, it represents that terrible struggle between theology and science which, having begun in the persecution of science and in the martyrdom of scientific men, has, in these late days, taken a happier turn, and is now manifestly destroying that old theological spirit, which has brought so much ruin and misery upon the world.

“The ancient superstition, which was once universal, but is now slowly though surely dying away, represented the Deity as being constantly moved to anger, delighting in seeing His creatures abase and mortify themselves, taking pleasure in their sacrifices and their austerities, and, notwithstanding all they could do, constantly inflicting on them the most grievous punishment, among which the different forms of pestilence were conspicuous. It is by science, and by science alone, that these horrible delusions are being dissipated. Events, which formerly were deemed supernatural visitations, are now shown to depend upon natural causes, and to be amenable to natural remedies. Man can predict them, and man can deal with them. Being the inevitable result of their own antecedents, no room is left for the notion of their being special inflictions. This great change in our opinions is fatal to theology, but is serviceable to religion. . . . Science ascribes to natural causes what theology ascribes to supernatural ones. According to this view, the calamities with which the world is afflicted are the result of the ignorance of man, and not of the interference of God. We must not, therefore, ascribe to Him what is due to our own folly, or to our own vice. We must not calumniate an all-wise and all-merciful Being, by imputing to Him those little passions which move ourselves, as if He were capable of rage, of jealousy, and of revenge, and as if He, with outstretched arms, were constantly employed in aggravating the sufferings of mankind, and making

the miseries of the human race more poignant than they would otherwise be." *

Now, we may be allowed here to remark that, on Mr. Buckle's own showing, there is in the circumstances alluded to ample reason for humiliation and prayer. Suppose that visitations such as the cholera are due to man's ignorance, folly, or vice, as Mr. Buckle asserts; and suppose that the universe is presided over by an Omniscient God, a truth which Mr. Buckle declares is fundamental with him; then it is surely reasonable to connect the ignorance, folly, or vice of man judicially with the pestilential visitation. Nor would there be any folly in a nation humbling itself before the Omniscient One and confessing the ignorance, folly, and vice of which some of its members have been guilty, more especially as after such confession there would be the less likelihood of the ignorance, folly, and vice continuing.

The only reasonable plea against the day of humiliation and prayer scouted by Lord Palmerston, would be such extreme urgency in the completion of the improved sanitation that even a day in the six months' work which his lordship prescribed could not possibly be spared; which plea no sensible man would set up. The fact is that Mr. Buckle *assumes* in his line of observation what no one is prepared to concede without distinct proof, that the course of nature is merely mechanical and in no sense moral. As this is begging the whole question in dispute, it is as well to have it at once detected and assigned its true weight in the controversy.

If vice and folly are names for real things, then, while we all admit that for wise reasons good and evil are not distributed in this life according to desert, but imperfect justice is meted out as the most striking of all prophecies of a world and judgment to come, we at the same time maintain that enough is done in the way of judgment to make thoughtful sinners acknowledge that they are watched and shall be rewarded by the Omniscient Judge.†

Some years after the petition of the Edinburgh Presbytery

* Cf. Buckle's "History of Civilisation," vol. ii., pp. 595-7.

† Cf. "Remains of Rev. Charles Wolfe." Sixth Edition, pp. 325-6.

to Lord Palmerston, a day of prayer and humiliation on account of a peculiarly bad harvest was appointed by the authorities of the Church of England; but, to use the language of Professor Tyndall, "certain clergymen of the Church of England, doubting the wisdom of the demonstration, declined to join in the services of the day. For this act of nonconformity they were severely censured by some of their brethren. Rightly or wrongly," continues the Professor, "my sympathies were on the side of these men; and, to lend them a helping hand in their struggles against odds, I inserted the foregoing chapter in a little book entitled 'Mountaineering in 1861.' " *

The foregoing chapter here referred to, consists in "Reflections on Prayer and Natural Law," suggested by Professor Tyndall happening to meet an athletic young priest in the summer of 1858 near the foot of the Rhone Glacier, who had come up to "bless the mountains." These reflections are intended to force the advocates of prayer into the position of either believing in the miraculous as still active in nature, or giving up the idea of the efficacy of prayer. He does this by the following statement of the scientific doctrine of the conservation of energy. "This principle asserts that no power can make its appearance in nature without an equivalent expenditure of some other power; that natural agents are so related to each other as to be mutually convertible, but that no new agency is created. Light runs into heat; heat into electricity; electricity into magnetism; magnetism into mechanical force; and mechanical force again into light and heat. The Proteus changes, but he is ever the same; and his changes in nature, supposing no miracle to supervene, are the expression, not of spontaneity, but of physical necessity."

"Science," he continues, "does assert, for example, that without a disturbance of natural law, quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse, or the rolling of the river Niagara up the Falls, no act of humiliation, individual or national, could call one shower from Heaven, or deflect towards us a single beam of the sun. Those, therefore, who believe that the miraculous is still active in nature, may, with perfect con-

* Cf. "Fragments of Science," Sixth Edition, vol. ii., p. 7.

sistency, join in our periodic prayers for fair weather and for rain; while those who hold that the age of miracles is past, will, if they be consistent, refuse to join in these petitions."

We desire to draw special attention to the way in which the Professor states the alternative. He does so, we are sure, with perfect sincerity, and he has done so with no little success; for we shall find as we proceed that some of the apologists commit themselves to lines of defence which mean neither more nor less than that we are still amid a dispensation of miracle. But, as we have, we hope, made plain, we are under no necessity to assume the miraculous as still active when maintaining the efficacy of prayer.

In the year 1860 Dr. Richard Löber published his "Die Lehre vom Gebet aus der immanenten und ökonomischen Trinität." We have already referred gratefully to this work as carrying the problem into the very highest regions of thought. It is more scholastic than scientific in its character, yet is well worth attention.

In the year 1863 the Rev. Thomas Hughes published his "Prayer and the Divine Order." From its title one is led to expect much, but gets in reality little. The author admits that his treatment is not scientific (p. 51), and, as he eschews the less ambitious practical methods, his work is singularly disappointing.

In the year 1865 there was a discussion on the relation of prayer to cholera carried on in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which Professor Tyndall took part. All that is of importance has been preserved for us in the "Fragments of Science." No fresh light was thrown on the subject by the discussion.

In the same year there was delivered at Oxford, upon the Bampton Foundation, the ablest series of lectures yet given to the world in connection with that now honoured name. I refer of course to the late Canon Mozley's book "On Miracles." Since the days of Bishop Butler the Anglican Church has produced no such thinker as Canon Mozley. Inasmuch, then, as Dr. Mozley proposed to deal with the question of the *credibility* of miracles, he was led at once to consider the bearing upon this of the "order of Nature." And in his treatment of this order in his second lecture he was led to show, as he does

with matchless cogency and clearness, that we have no rational basis for our belief in the continued uniformity of nature. We believe in the continued uniformity; we base upon our belief all our prudential calculations; it is a law of our practical life, and yet it is a mere instinct, "an unintelligent impulse of which we can give no rational account." It was necessary for him to make this clear, in order to take away the ground from those who persist in maintaining that miracles, as opposed to the order of nature, were on that account opposed to reason. "There being no producible reason why a new event should be like the hitherto course of nature, no decision of reason is contradicted by its unlikeness. A miracle, in being opposed to our experience, is not only not opposed to necessary reasoning, but to any reasoning." * Again he says: "What is disturbed by a miracle is the mechanical expectation of recurrence, from which, and not from the *system* and arrangement in nature, the notion of immutability proceeds." † And yet again, "It does not belong to this (the inductive) principle to lay down speculative positions, and to say what can or cannot take place in the world. It does not belong to it to control religious belief, or to determine that certain acts of God for the revelation of His will to man, reported to have taken place, have not taken place. Such decisions are totally out of its sphere; it can assert the universal as a *law*; but the universal as a law, and the universal as a proposition, are wholly distinct. The proposition is the universal as a fact, the law is the universal as a presumption; the one is an absolute certainty, the other is a practical certainty, when there is no reason to expect the contrary. The one contains and includes the particular, the other does not; from the one we argue mathematically to the falsehood of any opposite particular; from the other we do not. Yet there has existed virtually in the speculations of some philosophers an identification of a universal as a law, with a universal proposition; by which summary expedient they enclosed the world in iron, and bound the Deity in adamantine fetters; for such a law forestalls all

* "On Miracles." Second Edition, p. 48.

† Page 56.

exception to it." * Not content with this analysis of the inductive principle and what it logically implies, Dr. Mozley proceeds in the succeeding lecture to show that it is really the imagination, and not the intellect, which leads up to the position assumed by many that the uniformity of nature cannot be violated. "The passive imagination in the present case exaggerates a practical expectation of the uniformity of nature, implanted in us for practical ends, into a scientific or universal proposition; and it does this by surrendering itself to the impression produced by the constant spectacle of the regularity of visible nature. By such a course a person allows the weight and pressure of this idea to grow upon him till it reaches the point of actually restricting his sense of possibility to the mould of physical order." †

It can easily be supposed that such an able exposure of the unfair use which is being made of the inductive principle would not long escape criticism. Besides, Dr. Mozley, unfortunately, in his first lecture complicates his argument by contrasting miracles with special providences. He speaks of a special providence not differing from a miracle in its nature, but only in its evidence; and defines it as "an invisible miracle." The attentive student of Dr. Mozley's argument will see that this reference to special providences is not in any sense essential to it, and as the result proved, it was most unfortunate. Dr. Tyndall, whose attention had been called to the "Bampton Lecture," at once pounced upon Dr. Mozley's admission, and his review in the *Fortnightly*, since reprinted in his "Fragments of Science," deals almost entirely with this. After alluding to the manly position Dr. Mozley takes up upon the question of miracles, Professor Tyndall goes on to say: "Nor is it by miracles alone that the order of nature is, or may be, disturbed. The material universe is also the arena of 'special providences.' Under these two heads Dr. Mozley distributes the total preternatural. One form of the preternatural may shade into the other, as one colour passes into another in the rainbow; but, while the line which divides the specially providential from the miraculous cannot

* Pages 58-9.

† Page 68.

be sharply drawn, their distinction broadly expressed is this : that, while a special providence can only excite surmise more or less probable, it is 'the nature of a miracle to give proof, as distinguished from mere surmise, of Divine design.' " * This opening was too precious to be neglected by the acute Professor, and so he proceeds to ridicule alleged answers to prayer related by a Methodist chronicler, and answers expected by Tyrolese peasants at the mountain shrines, and brackets Dr. Mozley's belief with theirs as substantially the same. With Professor Tyndall's attempt to invalidate Dr. Mozley's position regarding the order of nature we are not here further concerned. But one thing we trust we have made clear, and that is, that the position to which the assailants of prayer desire to commit us, but which we have no need to concede, is that the efficacy of prayer, and the miraculous as still active among us, stand or fall together. That the testimony in favour of the miraculous in primitive times is abundant and sufficient we most firmly believe ; that the miraculous has, as far as we know, ceased, let us concede without hesitation ; but the efficacy of prayer is not, as we have shown, touched thereby. It is a matter of great regret that Dr. Mozley should have laid himself open by his allusion to "special providences" to the animadversions of the Professor. The reply of Canon Mozley to his critic, which handles the single point of the sinlessness of Christ, and which appeared in the *Contemporary Review*, is one of the finest essays in any language, and we do not wonder that it has remained unanswered. It has just been republished in his "Lectures and Other Theological Papers."

As we have devoted a separate note to the Hospital Prayer Test, we need not refer at length to the discussion in 1872. Suffice it to say that the proposal, coupled with Mr. Galton's paper on the statistics of the subject, evoked a large amount of discussion. Dr. Littledale replied in the *Contemporary Review*, showing the general consensus of mankind to the practice of prayer and its significance. In the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for October 1872, a paper

* "Fragments of Science," vol. ii., pp. 10, 11.

appeared on "The Philosophy of Prayer," in which we presented in briefer compass the argument elaborated in the present book ; while Dr. McCosh followed Dr. Littledale with a short and characteristic paper in the *Contemporary Review*.

We would now ask attention to the additional apologetic literature which the objections to prayer have evoked. The review must necessarily be brief, but we trust it will prove just. We propose arranging the notices of the apologists logically rather than chronologically.

And first, we would ask attention to the Burney Prize Essay for 1873, entitled "Christian Prayer and General Laws," by George J. Romanes, M.A. This gentleman has since been making a name for himself as an authority upon "Animal Intelligence." His essay is an elaborate argument from our ignorance. He wishes to show that "the question at issue is a question entirely beyond the range of philosophical discussion." * In doing so, he simply accepts the first principles of Herbert Spencer's philosophy as axiomatic, but, instead of insisting on the folly of prayer when God is "unknown and unknowable," he insists on the folly of discussing the question at all. His essay has all the appearance of an *argumentum ad hominem* addressed to members of the Agnostic School, and should be valuable to them, if they would take his advice. But unfortunately no ability, even of the order of Mr. Romanes, will suffice to keep the Agnostics to their own domain. Even when he insists, not only on our having no direct knowledge of the relations of general laws to God, but that "analogical inference is unable to touch" them, † his associates, we fear, will turn a deaf ear to his syren voice, and speculate on the subject notwithstanding. The discussion throughout the essay—which, with its supplement, runs to 268 pages—is chiefly a verbal one, and is not likely to have much weight either with the Agnostics, whose fundamentals he accepts, or with the Christian public, whose practice he very hesitatingly defends. There can be little doubt, moreover, from a careful comparison of the two volumes as to style, statement, and method, that "A Candid Exami-

* Page 134.

† Page 90

nation of Theism," by Physicus, is by the same author, and if this is so, it is evident that his apology for prayer has not long satisfied himself. It has been very properly said regarding the latter volume, and the same observation applies to the essay under present consideration, "the chief argument is, that the conservation of energy explains everything. . . . This doctrine no more explains the design in things than does the related one of the indestructibility of matter. Both doctrines are compatible with utter phenomenal chaos. The cause of the phenomenal order, therefore, must be sought elsewhere. The doctrine in question is a mere commonplace, and is utterly powerless to throw any light on philosophical questions." *

At the same time, the argument, which one committed to the fundamentals of the Agnostic philosophy can so feebly urge, may be urged with considerable weight by those who are not Agnostics. It is simply this, that if men like Professors Beesly and Tyndall are committed to the position that we neither know nor can know anything about God, then their discussion of such a subject as prayer can only be from an antagonistic and proselytising spirit. Prayer with an Agnostic is a waste of effort, since the Being addressed can make no sign—nay, since it is even suspected that He does not understand Himself or give to outsiders any intelligent account of His own being.† With the Agnostic School, therefore, the *inefficacy* of prayer is an early deduction from their fundamentals, and they can have no impartiality in this debate. They are committed as partizans to a position of hostility, and must be proportionally suspected.

We must at the same time do Mr. Romanes the justice of acknowledging that towards the end of his essay he once or twice gets upon suggestive lines of analogy which would have proved most fruitful, had he not been dominated by his earlier acceptance of the Spencerian principles.‡

* Professor B. P. Bowne's "Studies in Theism," Note, p. 185.

† Cf. Mr. Romanes' Essay, Note, p. 26, with Physicus' "Candid Examination of Theism," p. 195.

‡ See especially pp. 161-8.

Assuming, then, that it is idle to expect our Agnostic philosophers to hold their hands in any discussion upon prayer, but, in contradiction of their own fundamentals, that they will insist on at least so much knowledge about God as that He neither can nor will hear prayer, we must inquire now what the apologists have offered in defence of the practice of prayer. And here we would ask attention to the view propounded by the late Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton. We need hardly say that whatever is advanced by one whom the late Dean Stanley has not hesitated to call "the greatest preacher of the nineteenth century,"* is entitled to the respectful and earnest consideration of every thinker. Now Mr. Robertson appreciated the difficulty of maintaining the efficacy of prayer in face of the reign of law, which, we are assured, embraces everything. Accordingly, taking as his text our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxxvi. 39), he proceeds to rear upon this single particular a most sweeping universal, and declares that "all prayer is to change the will human into submission to the will Divine."† We shall not pause upon the questionable interpretation adopted by Mr. Robertson and his numerous echoes, that our Lord's prayer on this occasion was denied. It may be shown, we think, most conclusively, that what our Lord prayed for was answered in the deliverance from all death through His resurrection, and in the deliverance from intolerable mental agony such as He was then enduring.‡ Consequently the whole assumption of prayer being inefficacious in this crucial case of Christ breaks down. But even granting that the fact was in favour of Mr. Robertson's view, his theory would very soon put an end to all prayer. The will of God, he assumes, is an unchangeable factor in the process, and prayer merely brings the human will into accordance therewith. That is to say, to

* Cf. *The Century* for February, 1882, p. 559.

† Cf. Sermon III. in the Fourth Series.

‡ Cf. Dr. John Brown's "Exposition of Hebrews," vol. i., pp. 225, 226.

adopt the felicitous language of the Duke of Argyll, "Prayer to God has no other value or effect than so far as it may be a good way of preaching to ourselves." * M. Bersier has written a very excellent discourse in reply to Robertson, in which, among other things, he shows with his usual clearness that *intercession* becomes upon this subjective hypothesis perfectly impossible. "In fact," he says, "if I cannot act upon another, if I can effect no change upon his destinies, I know not really for what end I should pray for him. From that point intercession becomes impossible: it ought to be relegated to the region of religious illusions, for in interceding for others I shall be only acting in my own interest, I shall be only developing my own interior life. Selfishness then, is the last word in this system, selfishness in prayer, where all my outgoings have reference solely to myself." † Not only so, but this subjective hypothesis strikes at the root, not only of intercession, but of *all* prayer. It makes of it, to use Dr. Littledale's forcible expression, "an immoral sham." It is a handing of humanity over to inevitable fate, under whose shadow nothing but silent submission can reign. In Emerson we find the doctrine carried to its legitimate conclusion. "Prayer," he says, "is the *contemplation* of the facts of life from the highest point of view." ‡ Very soon this contemplation will give place to the drudgery of continual activity, and *Laborare est orare* will soon sum up the devotions of the world. "As soon," continues Emerson, "as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends." § No wonder, therefore, that some scientific men are willing to allow to prayer this subjective value. Under its spell the communion of man with his Maker degenerates into that inarticulate appeal which a dumb workman makes to

* Cf. "Reign of Law," Fifth Edition, pp. 60, 61.

† Cf. "Sermons," par Eug. Bersier, tome iv., p. 104.

‡ "Essays," Boston Edition, vol. i., p. 68.

§ *Ibid.*

a silent Heaven. Paley puts the matter in a clear light when he says, "After all, the duty of prayer depends upon its efficacy; for I confess myself unable to conceive how any man can pray, or be obliged to pray, who expects nothing from his prayers, but who is persuaded, at the time he utters his request, that it cannot possibly produce the smallest impression upon the Being to whom it is addressed, or advantage to himself." * Well may we exclaim with the Duke of Argyll, "How can they pray who have come to this? Can it ever be useful or helpful to believe a lie?" † From what has been stated in the body of the present work, it will be evident to all that there is room in the "Reign of Law" for the efficacy of prayer, and no need to surrender its objective value.

We would now pass to another compromise hazarded upon the subject, which, though in some respects analogous to Robertson's, does not propose to surrender quite so much: we refer to the theory of Mr., now Professor, Knight as given in a paper in the *Contemporary Review* for January 1873, on "The Function of Prayer in the Economy of the Universe." It is briefly this, that while prayer can have no *physical* effect, it has a *spiritual* one. In other words, Mr. Knight surrenders the whole domain of physics to the dominion of inexorable law, while he reserves man's "spiritual freedom" and "the eternal freedom of God" as the sphere for the action of prayer. He further allows that prayer may have a secondary influence on physical nature, but through influence communicated in the first instance to men as spiritual beings, and through them wrought out in the physical world. That there may be no mistake as to our author's meaning, let the following quotation suffice: "We pray for a friend's life that seems endangered. Such prayer can never be an influential element in arresting the physical course of disease by one iota. But it *may* bring a fresh suggestion to the mind of a physician, or other attendant, to adopt a remedy which, by natural means, 'turns the tide' of ebbing life, and determines the recovery of the patient. Or we pray for the removal of

* "Moral Philosophy," book v., chap. ii.

† "Reign of Law," p. 61.

a pestilence, and the answer is given within the minds and hearts of those who take means to check it or uproot it. The latent power that lies within the free causality of man may be stimulated and put in motion from a point beyond the chain of physical sequence; and crises innumerable may be averted through human prayer, thus dislodging a spiritual force that slumbers, and sending it beneficially forth from its 'hiding place of power.'"

Now this theory, which proposes to divide by a hard-and-fast line the physical from the spiritual sphere, fails to satisfy the requirements of the case. The Scientists assert that the intellectual and moral nature of man is included in the reign of law just as well as his bodily nature; and consequently if Mr. Knight admits that prayer is an impertinence in the physical sphere, he has the very same reason for admitting it to be an impertinence in the intellectual and moral. In a very able though brief paper in the *Contemporary Review* for February 1873, entitled "Prayer: the Two Spheres—Are they Two?" the Duke of Argyll shows the utter untenability of Mr. Knight's position. We need not dwell upon the details of this refutation, but shall merely quote the Duke's closing sentence: "Reason, Science, and Revelation alike point to the folly and ignorance of any attempt to draw an absolute line, where we confessedly have not the knowledge to enable us to do so; and confirm the sound philosophy, as well as the piety, of the old Christian practice of 'in all cases making our requests known' with the over-riding, over-ruling condition, 'Nevertheless not our will, but Thine be done.'"

Let us now pass to the theory of the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke upon the subject, which is a compromise very similar to Professor Knight's and Mr. Robertson's. He gives it to us in two Sermons published in his volume "Christ in Modern Life," and issued in 1872. He says, "Prayer has come into contact with scientific discovery, and I express the problem in theological terms when I say that the unchangeability of God

* Mr. Romanes devotes a considerable space of his "Supplementary Essay," pp. 208-236, to the refutation of Mr. Knight, much more than his theory deserves.

as Lord of the physical world is expressed in modern science by the law of conservation of force, and that that law denies the power of prayer to alter any natural sequence." What does Mr. Brooke in these circumstances propose? He proposes to give up all faith in prayer for physical objects, but at the same time he would advise men to yield to the instinct prompting them to pray, and so gain relief. "I do not therefore believe that God interferes in any extraordinary manner with the usual course of nature. I do not believe that prayer does either bring or restrain rain; I do not think that it can check the cholera or divert the lightning. At the same time I believe that God could stay the rain and dismiss the pestilence, if it were His will, at the voice of prayer. He may do so for all I know, but it would make me miserable to think that it were so. Directly, then, we ought not to pray for interference with the course of nature."

But, then, he proceeds to maintain that *inspiration* is still possible, notwithstanding the reign of law, and that through the inspiration of man God may and does modify the physical universe. And if prayer keeps this steadily in view, it is, he thinks, legitimate and efficacious. "Such prayers have force; such prayers do modify, not directly, but indirectly through the effort of man, the course of the universe." And yet, after thus dividing the spheres, he counsels us to carry out the paradox of asking Him to do so for us, "even when we have no hope, even when we know that God will not change His laws." "There is a natural rush of the heart into petition," he says, "which it would be spiritual suicide to check." His position consequently is, "Expression relieves the o'erfraught heart, and, the pressure removed, it rebounds into the natural strength of health."

It will be evident from these quotations that Mr. Brooke differs but little, if anything, from Mr. Robertson, whose biographer he has been. For the sake of the subjective influence prayer ought, he maintains, to be practised, even when we have no hope of any outward efficacy. But surely to yield to an instinct which is delusive could not long continue to relieve the heart. We may as well surrender the practice and privilege entirely, as live a delusive life like this.

The compromises proposed by Robertson, Brooke, and Knight fail, consequently, to satisfy any candid inquirer. If the "reign of law" and the "conservation of energy" demand such sacrifices as these, we may as well surrender the whole subject of prayer, and content ourselves with silent submission to inevitable fate. Let us take up the position of *automata* at once, and be the silent, even though surly, puppets in the hands of inexorable and unalterable law.

We shall now consider the contribution made by Dr. W. G. Ward to this subject. Next to Cardinal Newman, Dr. Ward is the most important recruit given by the Oxford movement to the Church of Rome. His essay upon prayer was originally published in the *Dublin Review* for April 1867, but has been reprinted lately under the title, "Science, Prayer, Free-will, and Miracles." We need hardly say that, like all Dr. Ward writes, this essay is characterised by great ability and fairness. It is chiefly remarkable for a parable it contains, to bring out clearly what he calls God's constant and unremitting "pre-movement." Dr. Ward, then, is ready for argument's sake to admit that "the whole material world proceeds unexceptionally on the basis of phenomenal uniformity; that the laws of nature are most absolutely fixed"; but this, he maintains, does not exclude, but rather favours, the supposition of a Divine pre-movement. This he illustrates thus:—

"We begin, then, with imagining two mice, endowed, however, with quasi-human or semi-human intelligence, enclosed within a grand pianoforte, but prevented in some way or other from interfering with the free play of its machinery. From time to time they are delighted with the strains of choice music. One of the two considers these to result from some agency external to the instrument, but the other, having a more philosophical mind, rises to the conception of fixed laws and phenomenal uniformity. 'Science as yet,' he says, 'is but in its infancy; but I have already made one or two important discoveries. Every sound which reaches us is preceded by a constant vibration of these strings. The same string invariably produces the same sound; and that louder or more gentle, accordingly as the vibration may be more or less intense. Sounds of a more composite character result when two or

more of the strings vibrate together ; and here, again, the sound produced, as far as I am able to discover, is precisely a compound of those sounds, which would have resulted from the various component strings vibrating separately.

“ ‘Then there is a further sequence which I have observed ; for each vibration is preceded by a stroke from a corresponding hammer ; and the string vibrates more intensely in proportion as the hammer’s stroke is more forcible. Thus far I have already prosecuted my researches. And so much at least is evident even now—viz., that the sounds proceed not from any external and arbitrary agency—from the intervention, *e.g.*, of any higher will—but from the uniform operation of fixed laws. These laws may be explored by intelligent mice ; and to their exploration I shall devote my life.’ Even from this inadequate illustration,” continues Dr. Ward, “you see the general conclusion which we wish to enforce. A sound has been produced through a certain chain of fixed laws ; but this fact does not tend ever so distantly to establish the conclusion that there is no human pre-movement acting continually at one end of that chain.

“Imagination, however, has no limits. We may very easily suppose, therefore, that some instrument is discovered, producing music immeasurably more heavenly and transporting than that of the pianoforte ; but for that very reason immeasurably more vast in size and more complex in machinery. We will call this imaginary instrument a ‘polychordon,’ as we are not aware that there is any existing claimant of that name. In this polychordon the intermediate links—between the player’s pre-movement on the one hand, and the resulting sound on the other—are no longer two, but two hundred. We further suppose—imagination (as before said) being boundless—that some human being or other is intermittently playing on this polychordon ; but playing on it just what airs may strike his fancy at the moment. Well ; successive generations of philosophical mice have actually traced one hundred and fifty of the two hundred phenomenal sequences, through whose fixed and invariable laws the sound is produced. The colony of mice shut up within are in the highest spirits at the success which has crowned the scientific labour of their leading thinkers, and the most eminent of these addresses an assembly :—

“ ‘ We have long known that the laws of our musical universe are immutably fixed, but we have now discovered a far larger number of those laws than our ancestors could have imagined *capable* of discovery. Let us redouble our efforts. I fully expect that our grandchildren will be able to predict as accurately, for an indefinitely preceding period, the succession of melodies with which we are to be delighted, as we now predict the hours of sunrise and sunset. One thing, at all events, is now absolutely incontrovertible. As to the notion of there being some agency *external* to the polychordon—intervening with arbitrary and capricious will to produce the sounds we experience—this is a long-exploded superstition; a mere dream and dotage of the past. The progress of science has put it on one side, and never again can it return to disturb our philosophical progress.’ ”

This parable about the mice, thus elaborated by Dr. Ward, is beautiful and ingenious; but we are unwilling to commit ourselves to a defence of prayer which practically insists on the recognition of God's immanence and operation in *everything*. Does God leave nothing to His creatures as fellow-workers with Him? Are we bound to believe, in order to the efficacy of prayer, that God really commits nothing to subordinate agents, but is *the Agent in every detail* Himself? We can understand from such a theory why Dr. Ward binds up the question of miracles with his apology for prayer, and is emphatic in stating his belief in the miraculous as still in operation, at all events within the charmed circle of the Church of Rome. But if prayer is to be successfully defended against its assailants it must be kept distinct from the question of miracles; it must be kept especially distinct from the question of “ecclesiastical miracles,” for, as it appears to us, if we cannot show a sphere for it, independently of the miraculous, we may give up the whole battle. While saying thus much in criticism of Dr. Ward's position, we cannot forbear acknowledging the great ability and interest which his essay has thrown around this subject.

We have now to ask attention to two apologies for prayer delivered in Trinity College, Dublin, —the one by the late Bishop O'Brien, the other by Provost Jellett. Bishop O'Brien's

"Sermons on Prayer," five in all, were delivered in the years 1836 and 1837. They remained, however, unrevised until the Bishop's death, and were published in 1875 just as they were left. They are consequently not as compact in form nor as elaborately finished as they would have been, had the able author of "The Nature and Effects of Faith" been able to give them a final revision. Still the book is valuable in showing in what direction the true solution lies. We do not meet in his book such terms as "conservation of energy" and "reign of law," which have become current since his time, but we have at least the substance of the current objections given. He puts these into a nutshell when he says, "The only difficulty connected with the subject which is likely much to affect a reasoning mind, arises from regarding prayer as an attempt to settle or to unsettle what is irrevocably fixed, as being the result of causes operating according to immutable laws." *

His answer is complete. He makes it plain that the foreknowledge we ascribe to God is not causal (p. 8); it does not interfere with the freedom of the creature; and he shows that the same argument which is urged against prayer might be urged against *action*. Ploughing and sowing might be as legitimately objected to on the ground of the prearrangement of all things as prayer.†

He goes on further to show that personal influence enters into the midst of the immutable laws and directs them, and so constitutes an instructive analogy for prayerful influence (p. 15). When we see temporal good brought about by intelligent and moral agents, we may well believe in the possibility of the Supreme bringing about temporal or spiritual good in answer to prayer (pp. 19, 20). No amount of sophistry, he shows, suffices to make us impractical in the use of means, while it is allowed to endanger our communion with God (pp. 37, 38). He supposes intermediate spiritual agency, presumably angelic, carrying out the Divine will in answering prayer, while the stability of natural law is in no respect endangered (p. 96). Dr. O'Brien, as we have said, shows us

* Page 7.

† Pages 10, 34, 37.

at least the direction in which the true solution and defence are to be found.

Dr. Jellett's book upon "The Efficacy of Prayer" is the most elaborate defence yet furnished in the controversy. Like Dr. Ward's apology already noticed, it is remarkable chiefly for a single beautiful illustration. Dr. Jellett is handling the objection to Divine interference with the arrangements of the universe in answer to prayer as attributing to God the character of an "unskilful mechanic," and he proceeds to ask, "Is it derogatory to His character to suppose that He has purposes which cannot be effected by any system of mechanism, however perfect? Is it derogatory to His character to suppose that He has powers—and uses them—in the government of the universe which cannot be transferred to any system of mere matter, however admirable its arrangement might be? How," he continues, "should we decide a similar question in the case of man? Suppose that it were suddenly revealed to us that the machine of the thirtieth century would have as much power as the man of the nineteenth. Suppose that we could foresee that our successors of the thirtieth century would be able to construct a machine capable of doing, unaided, all that we of the nineteenth can do by any means. I suppose we should say that such an achievement indicated an enormous development of the human intellect. But suppose that we were told further, that this machine would do, not only all that we of the nineteenth century can do, but all that the men of the thirtieth century themselves could do, and even all that they wished to do. I think that we should call this a very one-sided development of the human intellect; for it would imply that, while the machine-producing power of the human mind had advanced with prodigious rapidity, its other powers and—more than that—its aims, had, comparatively, stood still. It is, we generally think, but a poor spirit whose aims do not soar far above its powers. But what should we say of one whose aims rose no higher than the power of a machine which he himself could make? If we wished to draw an ideal picture of intellectual perfection, should we do so by effacing that superiority of mind which has hitherto rendered so many of its powers

intransferable to matter? Shall we regard the possession of these intransferable powers as being itself a mark of imperfection? Is the superiority of mind over matter indeed but temporary, and do we look for a day when it shall have passed away for ever? Nay . . . there is that in the human mind which tells quite another story. There is that in the human mind which bids us look into the future, not with the anticipation that the powers of mind and of matter will ever be equalized, but rather that the inherent superiority of the former will every day become more marked."

This analogy Dr. Jellett has little difficulty in applying to God; and he asks most pertinently, "Shall we call it derogatory to the Infinite Spirit, that the marks of His ineffable superiority are ineffaceable even by Him? Is it unworthy of Him, that even He cannot construct a machine which could replace Himself—that He should have purposes which no system of matter could fulfil? Surely not."*

This beautiful illustration is the best thing in Dr. Jellett's book. But we must in all honesty take exception to his defence in this respect, that it virtually makes out every answer to prayer to be a miracle. "The truth is," says Dr. Jellett, "that to ask God to act at all, and to ask Him to perform a miracle, are one and the same thing."†

Now such a statement as this will not, we imagine, be accepted. It endangers the whole system of truth which congregates round prayer, and, as we have seen, there is no necessity to risk the defence of prayer and the present existence of the miraculous together. While, therefore, we acknowledge most gratefully the ability and beauty of much of Dr. Jellett's book, we must at the same time regard Bishop O'Brien's, notwithstanding its many repetitions, as more distinctly upon the line of real defence.

There are several other apologies for prayer to which we can only give a passing reference. Dr. Liddon has an admirable Sermon on Prayer in his Lent Lectures, entitled "Some Elements of Religion." Like all his pulpit efforts, it is thoroughly philosophical, while it rises in some of its

* Pages 44-6.

† Page 41.

passages to the finest eloquence. To M. Bersier's discourse, "La Prière est-elle efficace?" published in his fourth volume of Sermons, we have already gratefully referred. Nowhere, in fact, is the defence of prayer more concisely or beautifully stated. Three little manuals have also been issued by the London Christian Evidence Committee, two of them by the Rev. W. H. Karslake, M.A., on "The Theory of Prayer" and "The Efficacy of Prayer," and one of them, better than either of the others, by Rev. Phipps Onslow, B.A., on "The Reasonableness of Prayer." They are all worthy of attentive perusal.

In the year 1854 J. Freeman Clarke published "The Christian Doctrine of Prayer." It is the eighth edition, dated 1874, which we possess. In it we find the chief scientific objections carefully refuted. Written from the Unitarian standpoint, it is not as thorough as a Trinitarian can be, but it is an interesting and deservedly popular book.

Papers have also appeared in the *Expositor* for 1877, from the pen of Carpus and others, upon some of the aspects of the controversy, which are worthy of attention.

Our attention has also been directed to the Swedenborgian contribution to the controversy, and we have perused Mr. Parsons' essay in *Deus-Homo*, "God-man"; but we do not feel called upon to refer to it at any length, as his argument and ours have no resemblance.

While we write the controversy is being reopened in the *North American Review*; but the arguments presented in the number for August, whether for or against prayer's efficacy, do not call for any special reference, after what we have advanced.

We conclude by reiterating our obligations to Professor Wallace's able lecture delivered in Belfast, in 1875, on "Prayer in its Relation to Natural Law." But for it, and the encouragement of its author, our present argument would not have been presented to the public.



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